Hafa Adai!

Babauta questions $145K DFEMS car rental that lacks justification. PAGE 5

SBA disaster assistance available to CNMI private nonprofits. PAGE 6

$1

Saipan Tribune

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FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, second from left, and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang, third from right, lead the ceremonial ribbon-cutting for the completion of the 179th new home built under the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Permanent Housing Construction Program, in Chalan Kanoa yesterday morning. Also in the photo are FEMA Long Term Recovery Office director Wayne "Randy" Clayton, extreme left; homeowner Joaquina Agulto, fourth from left; Agulto's daughter Ana Lizama, third from left; Rep. Manny Castro (Ind-Saipan), second from right; and Rep. John Paul Sablan (Ind-Saipan), extreme right.

FEMA turns over 179th completed new house

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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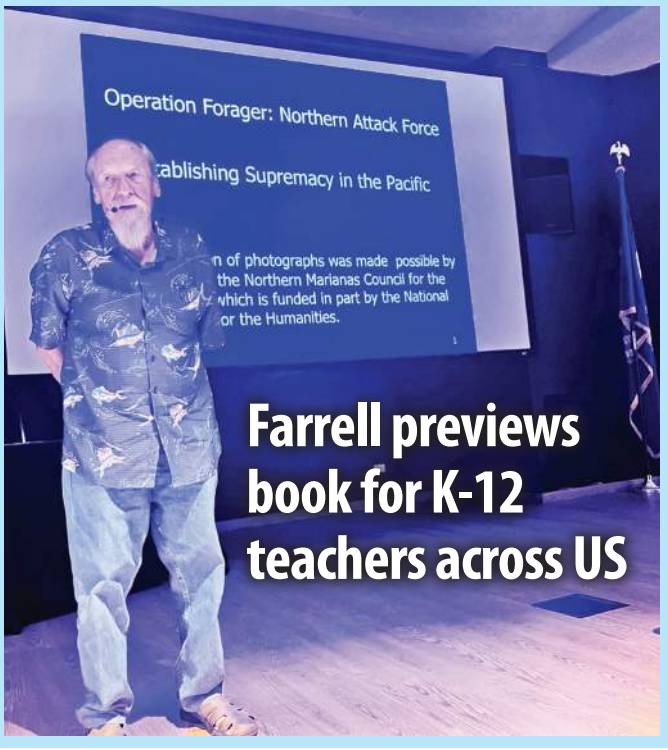
REPORTER

The Federal Emergency Management Agency turned over yesterday morning the keys to the 179th newly constructed home it built as part of a program to assist homeowners who lost their homes in the devastation of the Category 5 Super Typhoon Yutu in October 2018.

See FEMA on Page 4


Operation Forager: Northern Attack Force
tablishing Supremacy in the Pacific
n of photographs was made possible by
the Northern Marianas Council for the
which is funded in part by the National
or the Humanities.

Farrell previews book for K-12 teachers across US

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

K-12 teachers from across the U.S. who are visiting Saipan as part of a weeklong educational program were treated to a preview of CNMI historian Don Farrell's book, *Tinian and the Bomb: Project Alberta and Operation Centerboard*.

During a presentation last Monday at the American Memorial Park's Visitors Center auditorium, Farrell traced the roots of the

See FARRELL on Page 4

MARK RABAGO

Don Farrell speaks during a presentation last Monday at the American Memorial Park's Visitors Center auditorium.

'Touchback exacerbates CHCC workforce shortage'

» CHCC proposes $22.7M budget for FY 2024; Palacios proposes only $1 for CHCC subsidy,

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Muña

Manglona

As with many other entities in the CNMI, the workforce shortage at the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. is expected to be further exacerbated by the "touchback" rule, according to CHCC chief executive officer Esther Muña on Wednesday.

Speaking before the Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee's Fiscal Year 2024 budget

See CHCC on Page 4

Wellness mission to continue as scheduled

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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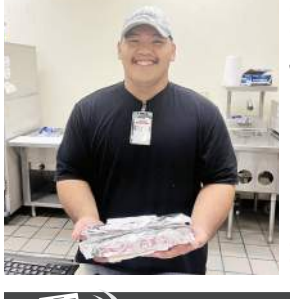
REPORTER

The U.S. Department of Defense's Innovative Readiness Training Operation CNMI Wellness is set to continue as scheduled despite recent news that it might have to be cut short by two days.

Last Wednesday, follow-

See WELLNESS on Page 4

INSIDE



BUSINESS
Joeten Superstore is giving away 200 hotdogs in celebration of National Hotdog Month.
PAGE 14

OFF THE WALL
A giant panda has given birth to squealing healthy twin girls at a South Korean theme park.
PAGE 18

LIFE & STYLE
HBO dominates the Emmy nominations, with a whopping combination of 74 nominations in all.
PAGE 19

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

GOT A NEWS TIP? TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

JULY 15 IS PADI WOMEN'S DIVE DAY

Public invited to fun dives on Sat.

Axe Murderer Tours Saipan will be hosting PADI Women's Dive Day 2023 on July 15. Women's Dive Day is a worldwide celebration that brings everyone together to foster a global community that encourages divers of all genders, ages, races, backgrounds and experience levels to safely and confidently seek adventure and save the ocean.

Join Axe Murderer Tours this Saturday at Lau Lau beach dive site from 8:30am until 12pm for a fun dive or discovery dive. Dives will be offered at a discounted $25 for this event. Equipment, dive tanks, and training will be provided. No certification is required for discovery diving, but certified divers are welcome and encouraged to join.

If you've ever been interested in diving, now is your chance to celebrate the diversity of the dive community and begin your diving adventure.

Free online dive training lessons are available via the QR code shown here. Individuals interested in discovery diving should complete this training prior to their dive Saturday.

You can contact Axe Murderer Tours via Facebook, Instagram, or WhatsApp/phone (1-670-287-2337) to make a reservation or to answer any questions. ***(PR)***

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Public grateful for DOD's free CNMI Wellness mission

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marimo@saipantribune.com
Correspondent

A U.S. military service member serves members of the community at the Medical Care and Treatment Site of the Commonwealth Health Center.

CHRYSTAL MARINO

After a successful start on Wednesday, the U.S. Department of Defense's Innovative Readiness Training Operation CNMI Wellness moves on to Day 3 today of providing medical and veterinary services at no cost to the community, and so far many individuals who have availed of these services have walked away with positive feedback and have expressed their appreciation for the collaborative effort.

With the operation schedule now back on track, military service members continue to assist many community members at the Medical Care and Treatment Site of the Commonwealth Health Center, and those with pets going to the former Saipan Cares for Animals clinic in Gualo Rai, and at the Saipan Mayor's Dog Control Center in Afetna.

Lt. Colonel Kristin Porter, public affairs officer for IRT Wellness Missions, said that, based on their numbers, the first day alone saw a total of 274 patients and 1,068 services were provided, with some patients being able to avail of several different services at the same time. They expect the numbers to peak in the coming days. The dollar amount of services availed by community members on Wednesday alone was worth $100,000, Porter said, and this wasn't even including the veterinary services.

Several members of the community have expressed gratitude for the opportunity. Paulina Garcia said her experience had been excellent and impressive, with only a short wait time. She said she had registered and availed of the services in the morning, which altogether took less than an hour, and upon completion brought her son, JP, so he could check out the eye services provided.

"It's just really needed for us, especially since [Presumptive Medicaid] is gone," she said. "We're so thankful for the military rendering their services now… especially on my part, I'm a diabetic… we need lots of maintenance, and now and then we need to be checked…"

Altogether, the wait time wasn't a bother at all, she said, and that service members were quick and great.

Finasisu resident Vannesa Abella said, "We are so happy and glad that the military is here and we have this opportunity…"

Abella, who arrived just a couple of minutes after opening time, said she was serviced in under 20 minutes, and that everything she needed were taken care of. Since the dental services were packed and therefore closed, Abella said she would just return the next day.

Since she doesn't have insurance coverage, Abella said this program is definitely a blessing.

Michelle Takai and Daisy Babauta, who help assist individuals register for the program, said that, for that morning alone, 57 registered for optometry, 40 for healthcare examination, and 60 for dental services, which was the service that got full the quickest.

Babauta and Takai said the process is simple: Just register at the Micro Beach site where you will get a colored wristband to identify which service you want to avail of. When the shuttle arrives, patients will be transported to the MCATS facility at CHC where they will receive their examination, treatment, etc., before being shuttled back to Micro Beach.

"If they want to do another service, they can just come back to the spot and register for another service, and if it isn't full, they can get another service," said Babauta

When asked if they are planning another IRT in the Marianas, Porter said they are having an upcoming one in Guam, but the CNMI Bureau of Military Affairs have already submitted an application for another IRT next year. Porter also wants to acknowledge the time and effort the CBMA has done to make this collaboration a possibility. "There are so many moving pieces in this. The CBMA—they're the ones trying to organize those pieces. For us, we recognize their hard work, because…we're involved in it, but…also…what the community needs to know, is the man hours, the time that they have put into this effort to serve the community."

She also recognized the importance of community partnerships and sponsors who helped make the event a possibility.

She shared that there were a lot obstacles along the way, with an equipment plane a day and half late because of maintenance issues, medical provider issues, especially with their flights and equipment arrival being delayed, and even time constraints.

"And so we had so many obstacles that kind of put constraints on what services we can provide, so in looking at the mission for next year, there has been discussion—I don't know the details yet—but instead of just doing two weeks, maybe we can split it and… have it for four weeks."

She also encourages individuals who have availed of services to fill out a feedback survey at bit.ly/3XJAW2E and comment or suggest things, treatments, and services they may avail of in the next IRT tour in the Marianas.

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Man involved in license fraud pleads guilty

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

The man accused of conspiring with former Bureau of Motor Vehicles director Juana Deleon Guerrero to produce fraudulent CNMI driver's licenses has pleaded guilty in the U.S. District Court for the NMI.

Li Yongde, better known as "Ivan," has pleaded guilty to license fraud related charges. Specifically, Li pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to unlawfully produce an identification document and conspiracy to commit bank fraud.

District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona Manglona found that the defendant was fully competent to enter a knowing and voluntary plea and accepted his change of plea, finding him guilty of the charges filed against him.

Manglona allowed Li to remain out of custody while awaiting his sentencing on Nov. 17, 2023, at 9am.

Last month, Li's co-conspirator, Deleon Guerrero, changed her plea from not guilty to guilty on one count of conspiracy to unlawfully produce an identification document, specifically local driver's licenses.

Deleon Guerrero is looking at a sentence between three and five years for her involvement in fraudulently producing over 50 licenses to undocumented individuals.

According to the unsealed information against Deleon Guerrero, on or about Jan. 1, 2020, through about Dec. 20, 2022, on at least 50 occasions, Deleon Guerrero conspired with Li, fellow BMV employees, residents of the CNMI without lawful immigration status, and others, to produce CNMI driver licenses unlawfully for 10 individuals without valid and current legal immigration statuses.

Specifically, Deleon Guerrero permitted Li, a citizen of the People's Republic of China without lawful immigration status, to bring PRC citizens and other nationalities without lawful immigration status, to the BMV, where those foreign citizens were then issued fraudulent CNMI driver licenses.

Li allegedly charged these individuals around $1,500 to $1,700 for a new license and around $300 to $400 for a renewal license.

Li would accept payments from foreign citizens and bring them to the BMV where they would meet with BMV staff, including Deleon Guerrero.

There, Li would assist foreign citizens by serving as a translator and by submitting driver license applications on their behalf that included fraudulent immigration documents.

The United States says Deleon Guerrero was aware that Li was facilitating these illicit transactions and even directed five members of her staff to assist Li with fraudulent distribution of CNMI driver licenses to foreign citizens without lawful immigration status.

The defendant also communicated directly with Li to make appointments or other necessary arrangements to facilitate the fraudulent scheme.

Deleon Guerrero accepted payments from Li, and others, through cash of upwards of $500.

In addition, the former director and five other members of the BMV were routinely treated to meals bought and paid for by Li.

CHCC

From page 1

hearing for CHCC, Muña discussed workforce and financing for health in the CNMI, which she cited as their top priorities as the committee considers the budget for the hospital and health system.

In response to committee chair Sen. Donald M. Manglona's (Ind-Rota) questions on challenges with the touchback provision, Muña said they have personnel in the laboratory , as well as radiology and in nursing that have "touch back."

Touchback refers to the requirement for foreign workers to leave the CNMI before their work visas could be renewed for a third consecutive time. That departure requirement also means they will have to stay away until a new permit is approved, which could take months.

Muña disclosed there are a couple of employees that are leaving in September 2023 and some in December 2023, May 2024, December 2024, and all the way to December 2025. She said the total number of employees affected in 2023 is 12; in 2024, it's 22; and in 2025, it's 25.

Even for the Northern Marianas College nursing graduates, there is always a push for them to pass their National Council Licensure Examination as soon as possible. "So we do have the graduate nursing program that exists. [But] without the NCLEX, they [only] have one year to work for CHCC," Muña said.

She said they actually provide a bonus for those who take the graduate nursing program. Muña said they encourage them to work at least for the graduate nurse program and also provide them assistance for studying and administrative leave, and even pay for their tests if they request as well.

"We're trying as much as we can to try to have them work especially to fill the gaps of the touchback," she said.

The CEO said they did hire less than a handful as some of them are pursuing their NCLEX.

In fact, one of the staff that works for CHCC as a graduate nurse actually recently passed the NCLEX and is going to be promoted to a registered nurse, Muña said.

She said the Commonwealth Health Center, which is the CNMI's only hospital, is not immune to the crisis of staff burnout and staff shortages.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

FEMA

From page 1

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang joined FEMA officials at a ribbon-cutting ceremony commemorating the end of FEMA's Permanent Housing Construction program at the final turnover of the new home in Chalan Kanoa, Saipan.

Joaquina Agulto's home, located on Pedro Avenue and Chalan Tun Joaquin Doi Road, is the 165th new home built on Saipan under the PHC Program, which is a FEMA program that builds a home completely for free. Fourteen other new homes were also completed on Tinian. In total, 101 households (93 on Saipan and eight on Tinian) also received direct repairs under the program.

FEMA approved the PHC Program on Nov. 16, 2018, to support the high demand for housing solutions at that time following Super Typhoon Yutu's widespread devastation on Saipan and Tinian. Yutu is considered the strongest typhoon ever recorded to hit the CNMI.

FEMA handed yesterday a certificate of appreciation to one of their leading contractors, Ruel Villacrusis, owner/general manager of RNV Construction, in recognition for "a job well done."

The project has had several delays in obtaining permits because it is located on a wetland, which was deemed biologically and archeologically sensitive.

The new house is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act—it has front door ramp, wider doors, shower bench, bathroom grab bars, lowered cabinet, lowered sinks, lowered light switches, lowered electrical panels, and lowered peep holes.

The roof and exterior are designed to withstand 195 miles per hour winds. The locking aluminum hurricane shutters are designed to withstand 195 mph winds, and are impact resistant.

In his remarks, Palacios said this completion of a new home signifies a major step toward full recovery from Super Typhoon Yutu's devastation in 2018.

Palacio said he and Apatang grew up in District 1, just a couple of blocks from Agulto's house, so they know who it belongs to.

"It's really nice to come back to the neighborhood," said the governor, who recognized Rep. John Paul Sablan (Ind-Saipan) "for taking care of the village."

He also recognized Robert Pesapane, who is the FEMA Region 9 acting director for Public Assistance Division, for his virtual presence at the ceremony.

Palacios said the completion of the final home under FEMA PHC is a testament to FEMA's and the CNMI's collective resilience and resolve to get things done.

The governor extended his gratitude to FEMA Region 9 leadership, especially to regional administrator Robert Fenton and Pesapane, who, along with FEMA Long Term Recovery Office director Wayne "Randy" Clayton, ensured the program's success.

"We look forward to your continued support as we progress with our public assistance and hazard mitigation programs," he said.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

FARRELL

From page 1

American-Japanese conflict leading up to World War II before talking about how the Marianas were integral in finally forcing Imperial Japan to their knees by dropping the atomic bombs nicknamed "Little Boy" and "Fat Man" three days apart on Aug. 6 and 9, 1945.

Before delving into his research on the atomic bombs decades ago, Farrell had a moral dilemma and it took some encouragement from his late father to proceed with his lifelong work.

He said Japan was introduced to the U.S. in 1953 when American Commodore Matthew Perry led a small squadron of U.S. Navy warships to Tokyo Bay with the goal of establishing relations with Japan as a coal refueling stop for U.S. ships trading with China.

Japan radically modernized after its first encounter with Perry's warships and, by the turn of the century, has become a power in the East, punctuated by Japan defeating Russia in the Russo-Japanese War of 1905.

Now somewhat part of the big boys, Japan sided with the Entente powers during World War I and gained possession of erstwhile German-controlled Micronesia after the Great War.

That brought Japan squarely in the crosshairs of the U.S. as its Micronesian possessions crowded its colonies in the Philippines and Guam.

It also didn't help that resource-hungry Japan made a whole lot of ruckus by invading Korea, Manchuria, and part of China to fuel its imperial ambition.

Fast-forward to the invasion of the Marianas, Farrell said the taking of Saipan and eventually Tinian was crucial because of Army Gen. Henry Harley "Hap" Arnold's need for a base to operate his beloved B-29 Superfortress long-range bombers.

Despite the U.S. only using two atomic bombs during World War II, Farrell said it actually had components to build more (as a way of scaring the Soviet Union who wanted to divide Japan a la Korea).

Farrell also shared the answer to the age-old question why Col. Paul Tibbits gave the assignment to bomb Nagasaki to Maj. Charles Sweeney—that, unlike the bombing of Hiroshima, the Nagasaki mission was not a guaranteed success and Tibbits didn't want to besmirch his newfound fame by following it up with a dud.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

WELLNESS

From page 1

ing the launch of Operation CNMI Wellness, it was reported that the DOD-funded medical mission might have to be cut short due to unforeseen circumstances. Fortunately, that is no longer the case.

According to Lt. Col Kristin Porter, public affairs officer for IRT Wellness Missions, CNMI Operation Wellness is back on its original schedule.

"We were preparing for a curtailment of mission dates due to the requirements for medical equipment load-out. Our Air Force partners are now sending additional team members to Saipan for equipment reset prior to transport to the next IRT mission, which is in Guam at the end of the month, allowing us to maintain services on Saipan until July 19 and on Tinian and Rota until July 18," she said.

With that, the medical mission is set to conclude on July 19 at 12pm for Saipan and July 18 at 6pm for Rota and Tinian.

Services provided include medical, optometry, dental, behavioral health services, and veterinarian services.

According to Capt. Gary Knight, Saipan Mission OIC, those interested in availing of any of the services provided can expect long wait times and are encouraged to bring beverages and snacks.

"Bring yourself maybe a snack, something to keep you entertained while you wait. It would be nice if you could bring your records and prescriptions but you don't necessarily need to bring them. If you have a specific case where you think it might be best to bring them to give our healthcare providers additional step forward, absolutely, but ideally we don't need records or even your ID," he said.

Col. Hugh West, mission commander for IRT CNMI, encourages the entire CNMI to avail of this medical mission as it is 100% free.

"All of our trained, credentialed, fully licensed providers here are providing these services to the community at no cost to the community at all," he said.

In an interview with CBMA special assistant Danny Aquino, he reminds everyone to go directly to the American Memorial Park for registration. Walk-ins at the Medical Care and Treatment Site of the Commonwealth Health Center, where the mission is being held, will be directed to AMP. "To the people, please take advantage of this mission. It's no cost to anyone. Go to the Memorial Park, do not come directly to CHC. At the Memorial Park, someone will register you for one service at a time and transport you to the MCATS."

For those interested in availing of free medical services provided by trained medical personnel from various branches of the military, head to the American Memorial Park from 8am to 6pm and get registered. COTA will be providing shuttle service to and from CHCC and AMP.

Babauta questions $145K DFEMS car rental that lacks justification

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

File photo show Sen. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan).

Sen. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan) has disclosed that one of the highlights of the transition report for the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services was the expenditure of $145,000 for car rentals without any justification.

Babauta, who chairs the Senate Executive Appointments and Government Investigations Committee, said the $145,000 car rental expenses taken from the DFEMS revolving fund that was cited in the transition report could have been used to buy more inventory for DFEMS, said the senator.

Babauta raised this issue last Friday during the committee's confirmation hearing for the nomination of Fire assistant chief Juan A. Pua to be the DFEMS commissioner.

Babauta said she is not sure if Pua is aware of these transactions while he was serving as assistant Fire chief, but it warrants looking into "to conserve precious and scarce resources of the department."

According to the transition report, the department spent $60,000 in 2021 and $84,015 in 2022 for car rentals, with the money coming from the DFEMS Saipan ambulance fee revolving funds. Copies of the purchase orders the department provided were allegedly blurry, blank, or hard to read.

Pua promised to review the recommendations from the transition report, prioritize the recommendations, and make changes and improvements in order to move the department in the right direction.

In response to other questions during the confirmation hearing, Pua said their rescue trucks are all operable but not in great condition. He said, however, that they are trying their best to maintain the vehicles and that they are looking for federal funding to replace the aging and unreliable trucks.

Pua agreed with Babauta that DFEMS has several revolving funds—the fire safety code revolving account, Saipan ambulance fee revolving account, another ambulance fee dedicated to Tinian and Rota, and a fire lane revolving account. He estimates the revolving funds to have a yearly total average of $300,000 to $400,000. He said these revolving funds help them with their operations such as to purchase medical equipment, medical supplies, tools, appliances, hoses, and other things.

"It's supporting our needs in regards to any shortfall," he said, adding that they also use such funds to maintain or renovate fire stations.

As for training, Pua said they make sure to comply with their certification requirements. Their certification as emergency medical technicians requires DFEMS personnel to undergo CPR training every two years. Pua said they prepare their personnel before the two years are up to take the recertification.

"So we do an in-service training like twice a week. We're doing quarterly physical fitness, agility test for personnel on the suppression side," he said.

In his capacity as acting commissioner, Pua said he tries to make himself available to everybody for help, but if anybody has a concern, he makes sure that they follow the chain of command.

"I'm not saying that they cannot bring up concerns to me directly, as long as there's communication between them and their immediate supervisors," Pua said.

Saipan has 119 firefighters, Rota has 28, and Tinian has 24.

Oscar M. Babauta, who is the special assistant for the Palacios-Apatang administration, said that Pua has over 33 years of professional experiences in the department.

Babauta said Pua entered the second fire cycle in 1989 and that his long history of professional services, credentials, and commitment to the Commonwealth makes him a viable candidate for DFEMS commissioner.

Many other DFEMS officials testified in support of Pua's confirmation as commissioner.

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Monday to Saturday
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

SBA disaster assistance available to CNMI private nonprofits

SACRAMENTO, Calif.—Low-interest federal disaster loans are now available to certain private nonprofit organizations in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands following President Biden's federal disaster declaration for Public Assistance as a result of Typhoon Mawar that occurred May 22 – 29, announced Administrator Isabella Casillas Guzman of the U.S. Small Business Administration. Private nonprofits that provide essential services of a governmental nature are eligible for assistance.

These low-interest federal disaster loans are available on Rota, Saipan, and Tinian.

"Private nonprofit organizations should contact…Franklin Babauta of the CNMI Homeland Security and Emergency Management Office by calling (670) 237-8000 or emailing franklin.babauta@cnmihsem.gov.mp to obtain information about applicant briefings," said director Tanya N. Garfield of SBA's Disaster Field Operations Center-West. "At the briefings, private nonprofit representatives will need to provide information about their organization"

The Federal Emergency Management Agency will use that information to determine if the private nonprofit provides an "essential governmental service" and is a "critical facility" as defined by law. If so, FEMA may provide the private nonprofit with a Public Assistance grant for their eligible costs. If not, FEMA may refer the private nonprofit to SBA for disaster loan assistance.

SBA may lend private nonprofits up to $2 million to repair or replace damaged or destroyed real estate, machinery and equipment, inventory and other business assets. SBA can also lend additional funds to help with the cost of improvements to protect, prevent or minimize the same type of disaster damage from occurring in the future.

For certain private nonprofit organizations of any size, SBA offers Economic Injury Disaster Loans to help with meeting working capital needs caused by the disaster. Economic Injury Disaster Loans may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that cannot be paid because of the disaster's impact. Economic injury assistance is available regardless of whether the nonprofit suffered any property damage.

The interest rate is 2.375% with terms up to 30 years. The deadline to apply for property damage is Sept. 8, 2023. The deadline to apply for economic injury is April 10, 2024.

Applicants may apply online, receive additional disaster assistance information and download applications at https://disasterloanassistance.sba.gov/. Applicants may also call SBA's Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955 or email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov for more information on SBA disaster assistance. For people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability, please dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunications relay services. Completed applications should be mailed to U.S. Small Business Administration, Processing and Disbursement Center, 14925 Kingsport Road, Fort Worth, TX 76155. ***(PR)***

PUBLIC NOTICE

VILLA DE CRUZ and WORLD ELECTRIC CONSTRUCTION, CO. and MR. ANGEL P. CRUZ

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that **Ms. LUVI BAYLON** is not authorized to transact business of any kind for or in the name of Villa De Cruz, World Electric Construction, Co., or Mr. Angel P. Cruz. Any Transactions made by Ms. Luvi Baylon for or in the name of Villa De Cruz, World Electric Construction, Co., or Mr. Angel P. Cruz will not be honored.

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

RFP NO: CPA-RFP-011-23-REPACKAGED
SUBMISSION DATE: JULY 28, 2023 TIME: 2:00 P.M.

SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT INTERIOR PLANTS RENTAL, SERVICE AND MAINTENANCE

THE PROPOSAL PACKAGE MAY BE PICKED UP AT THE OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY (CPA), 2ND FLOOR, ARRIVAL BUILDING, SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, SAIPAN, MP 96950, DURING WORKING WORKS BEGINNING JUNE 28, 2023.

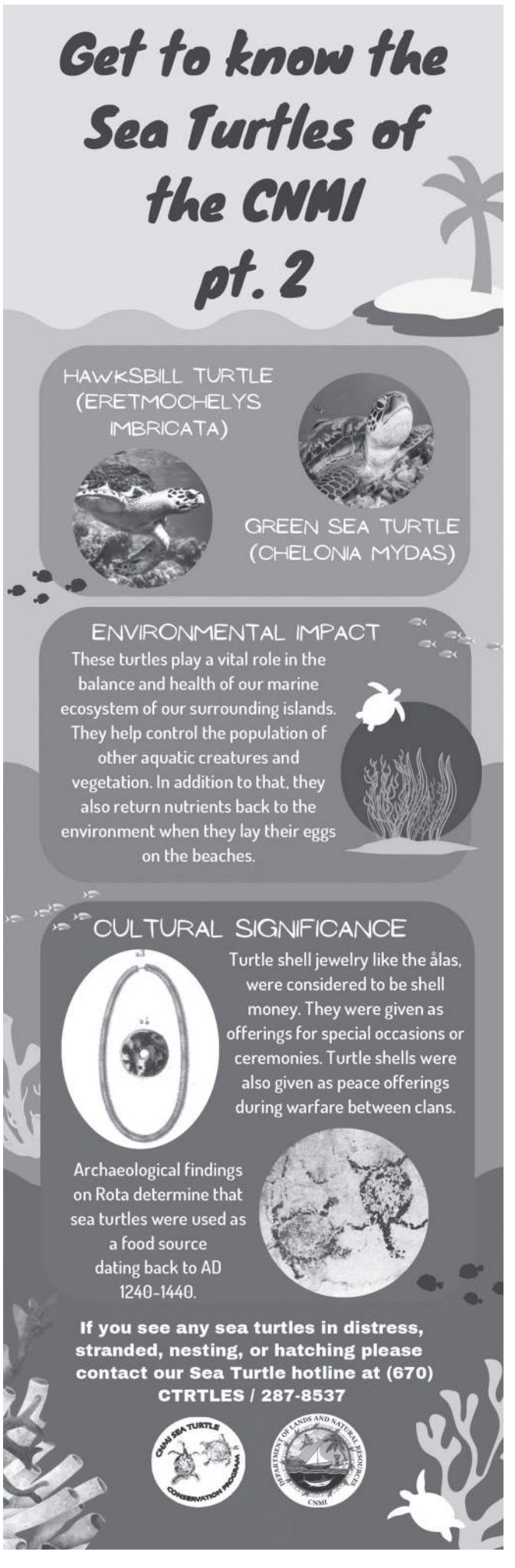
QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS PROJECT MUST BE IN WRITING AND ADDRESS TO THE PROCUREMENT OFFICER, COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY EITHER BY FACSIMILE AT 234-5962 OR EMAIL: atudela@cnmiports.com NO LATER THAN 4:00 P.M., JULY 20, 2023.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CPA PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION §40-50-1020 AND 1025 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CPA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSALS AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTION IN A PROPOSAL IF IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CPA. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THE CPA.

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Date: _____


Get to know the Sea Turtles of the CNMI pt. 2
HAWKSBILL TURTLE (ERETMOCHELYS IMBRICATA)
GREEN SEA TURTLE (CHELONIA MYDAS)
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
These turtles play a vital role in the balance and health of our marine ecosystem of our surrounding islands. They help control the population of other aquatic creatures and vegetation. In addition to that, they also return nutrients back to the environment when they lay their eggs on the beaches.
CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE
Turtle shell jewelry like the ålas, were considered to be shell money. They were given as offerings for special occasions or ceremonies. Turtle shells were also given as peace offerings during warfare between clans.
Archaeological findings on Rota determine that sea turtles were used as a food source dating back to AD 1240-1440.
If you see any sea turtles in distress, stranded, nesting, or hatching please contact our Sea Turtle hotline at (670) CTRTLES / 287-8537

Eun Jun Wang named to Berea Dean's List

BEREA, KY—Eun Jun Wang of Saipan has been named to the spring 2023 Dean's List at Berea College.

A student is named to the Dean's List who achieves a GPA of 3.4 or higher while passing at least four total credits, a course load equivalent to 16 semester hours.

Berea College awards four-year tuition scholarships to all its students. Supported by Berea's No-Tuition Promise, Berea College admits only academically promising students with limited economic resources,

All students are required to work at least 10 hours per week in campus and service jobs. and must work 10 hours or more weekly, earning money for books, room and board. ***(PR)***

Name: Filomena Calingasan Solomon
Address: P.O. BOX 503604
Phone: (670) 483-6462
Pro Se

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In Re the Matter of the Petition to Correct:	FCD CN CIVIL ACTION NO. 23-0218
FILOMENA CALINGASAN SOLOMON Petitioner(s)	**NOTICE OF HEARING**

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on July 26, 2023 at 1:30 p.m. in Courtroom 217A, before Associate Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio.

Dated this 6th day of June, 2023

Patrick V. Diaz
Clerk of Court
/s/_____
By: Deputy Clerk of Court

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

INNOVATIVE READINESS TRAINING
WELLNESS MISSION 2023
SAIPAN, TINIAN, ROTA

The Commonwealth Bureau of Military Affairs, under the Office of the Governor, in collaboration with the Department of Defense, 807th Medical Command (Deployment Support) and various CNMI Community Partners are pleased to share information on the CNMI Operation Wellness Mission this July 2023.

NO COST TO THE COMMUNITY AND NO INSURANCE REQUIRED

FIRST COME, FIRST SERVE BASIS

For more information contact CBMA office at (670) 488-0330 or (670) 488-0660

MILITARY PERSONNEL WILL OFFER:

- Healthcare Exam Services
- Optometry Services
- Dentistry Services
- Veterinary Care
- Behavioral & General Health Public Education

Saipan:
July 12th - 19th, 2023
8AM - 5PM
(You have 6 Days remaining until July 19)

Veterinary Care
- Saipan Mayor's Office Dog Shelter
- Saipan Cares for Animals

Dentistry Services
Optometry Services
Healthcare Exams
Behavioral & General Health Public Education
- Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC) Medical Care and Treatment Site (MCATS)

Tinian:
July 12 - 17th, 8AM - 5PM
July 18th, 8AM - 12PM
(You have 5 Days remaining until July 18)

Veterinary Care
- Tinian Dog Control Office

Dentistry Services
Optometry Services
Healthcare Exams
Behavioral & General Health Public Education
- Tinian Junior-Senior High School

Rota:
July 12 - 17th, 8AM - 5PM
July 18th, 8AM - 12PM
(You have 5 Days remaining until July 18)

Dentistry Services
Optometry Services
Healthcare Exams
Veterinary Care
Behavioral & General Health Public Education
- Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Junior-Senior High School

First day of vet IRT benefits 6 pets

Kicking off a weeklong military training program that offers free medical and veterinary services in the CNMI, Monday marked a great start for veterinarians and community members who participated in what is being dubbed "IRT CNMI Wellness Mission."

The veterinarian services took place at the Office of the Mayor's Dog Control Center and Saipan Cares for Animals, with military veterinarians and their vet techs servicing pets from 8am until 5pm.

Dog Control program manager Martin Pangelinan said the Mayor's Dog Control Office is focusing on spay-and-neuter operations and would entertain six animals a day, mainly dogs and cats, at one pet per owner. The four other veterinarians and their vet techs at SCA would be handling not only spay and neuter operations, but will also be taking in walk-in emergencies, and offering medical check-ups for pets.

With a cap of six pets per day, and no appointments being made, services were on a first-come, first-serve basis.

When asked why only six pets per day, Pangelinan said the Innovative Readiness Training is technically a training program for military veterinarians to train their vet techs, so there is more focus on the training aspect rather than the number of dogs and cats serviced.

"…Although it would be nice to kind of top the numbers to 20-plus, but…we understand where they're coming from, and we're just very fortunate that they are here to provide the services to the CNMI," he noted.

He did says that having veterinarians come to Saipan has to continue consistently "if we want to see changes" in the overpopulation of strays on island.

"We've been doing it already for the past few months. We've been bringing in vets, we've been working with our partners at the Saipan Humane Society…so we've been coordinating with veterinarians from off island to come and implement the spay and neuter clinic, because it's a great way to control the animal population."

U.S. Army Lt. Col. Brian Collins, the main military veterinarian at the Office of the Mayor's Dog Control Center, said the first day is "going well" and that they serviced five dogs and one cat that day.

He also noted that he had been on Saipan last year during the military's two weeklong spay-and-neuter clinic, and that he loved the island. "…We're appreciative…that we have the opportunity to do this. It's a great training for our soldiers to get to do this real-world stuff…"

Pangelinan encourages the community to visit one of their locations and avail of these free services. "The opportunity is here. It's a great opportunity at no cost," he said.

Pangelinan also encouraged community members to keep the dog ownership requirements such as all dogs must be registered, and confined within one's property, and to leash a dog in any public place. "We've got to work to together to take care of the situation."

Budget resolution referred to Senate Ways and Means

Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) has referred to the Senate Committee on Fiscal Affairs a concurrent resolution that seeks to approve the $172.5-million revenues and resources for fiscal year 2024 as identified by Gov. Arnold I. Palacios in the proposed fiscal year 2024 budget.

DeLeon Guerrero asked the Fiscal Affairs Committee to review Concurrent Resolution 23-2 and make recommendation.

The House of Representatives adopted the concurrent resolution last Friday. House Ways and Means Committee chair Rep. Ralph N. Yumul (Ind-Saipan) is the principal author of the legislation.

Also on Friday, DeLeon Guerrero appointed members of a conference committee, if such committee is necessary, to tackle the concurrent resolution.

Its members are Sen. Donald Manglona (Ind-Rota), chairperson; Sen. Corina L. Magfona (Ind-Saipan), vice chair; Sen. Karl R. King-Nabors (R-Tinian), member; and Sen. Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) or Sen. Francisco Q. Cruz (R-Tinian), alternate members.

Senate legal counsel Antonette Villagomez, fiscal analyst Dave Demapan, and legislative assistants Jolyn B. Duenas-Tagabuel and Devin C. Macaranas will assist the conferees. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 23-086

Opening Date: Monday, July 3, 2023
Closing Date: Monday, July 17, 2023

POSITION TITLE:	**Public Information & Media Specialist**
DEPARTMENT:	**COA / Administration Office**
LOCATION:	**Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA**
ANNUAL SALARY:	**$37,756.00 to $50,970.00 per annum, Exempt**
CONTRACT:	**Contracted**
POSITION(S):	**One (1)**

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Executive Director or his/her designee. This individual will utilize their skills in writing, editing, social media and corporate communication to enhance, improve, and advance CUC's communication to the public and the media. The ideal candidate will insist on the highest standards, understanding of the Corporation's values, dive deep into details, has a strong bias for action and sense of ownership, extract information to find commonalities between projects, and be able to multitask on various projects. This individual will keep their composure in fast-moving situations, be able to quickly get up to speed on complex issues, that involve the consumers, employees, and from time to time how matters relate from a government perspective. The role would suit a detail-orientated people person with a passion for storytelling and writing through the use of modern media.

Duties:
There are three (3) areas of responsibilities this individual will have to be responsible for and they are as follows:

- **Corporate Communications**
  - Provides high-quality writing, formatting, and proofing support of a variety of content.
  - Prepares annual corporate reports as needed.
  - Prepares press releases, public advisories, and public notices and collaborates closely with the Chief of Administration and the Executive Director prior to sharing the information with parties involved.
  - Coordinates meetings and corporate email communications relating to public information sharing and/or media publications to include social media.
  - Assists with the coordination and communication of internal and external events as needed.
  - Maintains and promotes communications by corporate standards, processes, and policies internally.
  - Monitors and tracks project deliverables and deadlines.
  - Responsible for compiling and formalizing reports for the corporation under the direction of the Executive Director or his/her designee.
- **Employee Relations Communication**
  - Craft and execute strategic internal communication plans for new programs, policies, procedures and changes.
  - Manage and support crisis communications. o Improve processes with new ideas and tools that are shared to all divisions within the Corporation.
- **Social Media Initiatives**
  - Grow and maintain our social presence through active social listening and consistent brand messaging.
  - Manage daily, weekly, and monthly social media plans in support of major organizational objectives.
  - Use data to develop a social media strategy, identify trends, provide insight, and execute recommendations to grow all of our social channels and engagements.
  - Work with HR to optimize social media for recruiting efforts. Plan content and ad campaigns to generate employment opportunity awareness.

Minimum Requirements:
Education & Experience: Bachelor's Degree in Communications, Journalism, Public Relations, Digital Media or related field and three (3) years of experience working in a corporate communications position in which must include two (2) years of professional social media experience with a demonstrated track record of success.
Proficiency in the applications of: Social media platforms – Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn; Microsoft software – Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook; and Adobe Creative Cloud All Apps – Photoshop, Illustrator, and InDesign.
Proficiency in multiple languages (such as legally recognized languages in the CNMI: English, Chamorro and Carolinian) is a plus.

Knowledge of: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth State and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances; Public relations principles and techniques; Effective business communication techniques; Media relations principles; Customer relations principles; Modern Office Technology.

Skills in: Interpreting and applying Federal, State, and/or Local laws, codes, rules, regulations and standards; Serving as a public information liaison and representative to the community; Demonstrating excellent time-management and organizational skills with strong attention to detail; Applying strong analytical, organizational, and prioritization skills, including general business processes and management; Utilizing professional verbal and written communication skills; Building robust communications programs and delivering results; Developing relevant content for a diverse, remote, and mobile workforce; Creating metrics to measure communication effectiveness, reach, and engagement.

Abilities: Must have **EXCELLENT WRITING** and **EDITING SKILLS** with the ability to communicate clearly and effectively with internal and external clients; Must be able to work occasional extra hours; Must be able to work on/direct multiple projects at one time without direct supervision and be able to handle deadlines, confidential information and interruptions in the work process; Must be able to multi-task; Must be able to work well with various levels of employees, cross-functional team members and diverse cultures; Must be able to comfortably deal with ambiguity and be able to form a cohesive and effective outcome from potentially incongruous facts (or lack thereof) and individual perspectives.

- **Licensing:**
  - Valid CNMI Driver's License with appropriate class.
- **Physical Demands and Work Environment:**
  - Generally, an office/desk position using a computer and telephone.
  - Occasionally required to lift and/or move up to 10 pounds and occasionally lift and/or move up to 25 pounds.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday to Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org.

P. O. Box 501220, Third Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-4282 • Fax: (670) 235-5131
CUC is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

PUTI'ON TWIN HULL
NOTICE OF AUCTION/BIDDING
MINIMUM BID: $20,000.00

Year: 1984; Official No. 677731; Call Sign: WCZ5662; Service: Passenger
Hull Material: Wood; Horsepower: 530; Propulsion: Diesel
Gross Tonnage: 99 GRT; Net Tonnage: 85 NRT; Length: 83.6; Breadth: 30.0; Depth: 11.0

For more information

Pursuant to the Stipulated Judgment in Commonwealth Ports Authority v. Saipan Sea Ventures, Inc., Civ. No. 18-0498, notice is given of the auction of the vessel owned by Saipan Sea Ventures, Inc., to be sold at auction by the Commonwealth Ports Authority. Risk of loss remains with Saipan Sea Ventures, Inc. until the winning bidder's bid is approved by the Commonwealth Superior Court after which time the winning bidder shall assume ownership and responsibility for the vessel. By submitting a bid and if accepted, the winning bidder agrees to accept full risk and responsibility of the vessel once approved by the Commonwealth Superior Court, including compliance with CNMI and Federal/USCG laws and regulations.

Please contact Commonwealth Ports Authority counsel, Robert T. Torres at (670) 234-7859/234-5750, Email: robert.torres@rttlawgroup.com. **Minimum bid for the Puti'on Twin Hull is $20,000.00.** Any bid(s) less than the minimum bid will be rejected. Bid submissions will be closed at 4:30 pm on **July 27, 2023.** Bid(s) opening shall be at 4:30 p.m. on **July 28, 2023.** The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any and all offer(s). A "Puti'on Twin Hull" bid form can be obtained from the Commonwealth Ports Authority, through its Counsel at Robert T. Torres Law Office, Chalan Kiya P.O. Box 500730 CK Saipan, MP 96950.

Bid Instructions

1. This is a private auction/bidding on behalf of the Commonwealth Ports Authority. The bidding is conducted through the Law Office of Robert T. Torres using a written/sealed bid process. However, the Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any and all offers including any offer not determined to be commercially reasonable. Bids may be sealed and submitted to the Law Office of Robert T. Torres in Chalan Kiya, Saipan with a copy valid Identification Card or Passport.
2. The Puti'on Twin Hull is offered for bid and sale **"As Is"** and without any warranty or guarantee as to fitness for use and each bidder is on notice to research this specialized and particular unit as a twin hull motor craft and the conditions in which it may be used in the CNMI or in other locations.
3. If a bid is accepted, the winning bidder shall tender the full amount upon notice and shall be responsible for the removal of the vessel within three (3) working days of court approval. Otherwise, the next highest bidder shall be considered.
4. A winning bid shall be paid by Cash or Cashier's Check within three (3) working days of notice to the winning bidder. Personal checks/company checks are not accepted. The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to cancel the bid and resell/re-auction the unit.
5. Inspection: Any person wishing to inspect the Puti'on Twin Hull may contact the Law Office of Robert T. Torres to request an inspection at least two (2) days prior to inspection.
6. **ALL BIDS ARE FINAL.**

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY

MVA IS HIRING!!!

JVA #	POSITION	OPENING DATE	CLOSING DATE
JVA#23-004	CHIEF ACCOUNTANT	JUNE 12, 2023	UNTIL FILLED
JVA#23-005	PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT MANAGER	JULY 3, 2023	JULY 17, 2023
LOCATION:	MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY - SAIPAN		

INTERESTED PERSONS MAY CONTACT THE MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY OFFICE AT (670) 664-3200/01 OR VISIT WWW.MYMARIANAS.COM FOR MORE DETAILS.

PACIFIC BASIN INSURANCE, CO.

Office Address: Beach Road, Chalan Laulau, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 500710, Saipan, MP 96950 | Email Address: pacificbasininsurance@gmail.com
Telephone Number: Tel. 1 (670) 234-5860

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

NAME OF EMPLOYER: Pacific Basin Insurance Company
THE POSITION: Insurance Underwriter
NUMBER OF OPENINGS: 2

JOB DESCRIPTION: Examine documents to determine degree of risk from related factors, such as financial standing and value and condition of property; Decline excessive risk or if it does not conform with the guidelines or if exposures are extremely high, obtain further information, quote rates, or explain company underlying policies; Determines the appropriate premiums, amounts of coverage, and other policy terms and conditions; Evaluate possibility of losses due to catastrophes or excessive insurance from underwriting guidelines; Review company records to determine amount of insurance in force on single risk or group of closely related risks; Process the insurance policies and related invoices; Monitoring of portfolio.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:

EDUCATION: Must be at least a High School Graduate.
EXPERIENCE: Must have at least 24 months of relevant work experience as an Insurance Underwriter.
OTHER SPECIAL SKILLS OR REQUIREMENTS: Must be results-driven, dedicated, independent, and hardworking; Must be technically-equipped underwriter for liability and other casualty lines; and Must be knowledgeable in claims-handling and business development.
JOB SITE: Beach Road, Chalan Laulau, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
HOW TO APPLY: If interested, please submit or mail application and comprehensive resume, with supporting credentials to:

JOSEPH C. REYES
President
PACIFIC BASIN INSURANCE COMPANY

DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

P. O. Box 501304, Saipan MP 96950 | Gualo Rai Center, Saipan | TEL. NO. 664-8300 | FAX NO. 664-8315
www.dcrm.gov.mp

NOTICE OF APPLICATION

As of June 30, 2023

THE FOLLOWING IS A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF COASTAL PERMIT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY THE DCRM OFFICE:

APPLICANT	DATE APPLICATION RECEIVED	APPLICATION PROJECT DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	TYPE	STATUS
1. Department of Public Works (DPW)	5/18/2023 SW-2023-017 (Formerly SW-2019-X-048	Japanese Road Improvement	As Terlaje, Saipan	Wetlands & Mangroves	Activity Under Review
2. B&J Corporation dba Dive Y2K	5/30/2023 Revised SLR-2023-073 (Formerly SLR-2021-053-R3)	Commercial SCUBA Diving Operation – UBA Activities	All Designated Dive Sites, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Approved 07/03/2023
3. Macro Energy, Inc.	5/30/2023 SLR-2023-026	Commercial SCUBA Diving Operation – UBA Activities	All Designated Dive Sites, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Approved 07/03/2023
4. Smart Star, Inc. dba Blue Bay Diving Club	5/30/2023 Revised SLR-2023-074 (Formerly SLR-2023-027-R2)	Commercial SCUBA Diving Tour/Operation – UBA Activities	All Designated Dive Sites, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Approved 07/03/2023
5. Thank You Saipan Corporation	5/30/2023 Revised SLR-2023-072 (Formerly SLR-2021-051-R3)	Commercial Banana Boat, & Parasailing (Towed Flotation) Operations	Kanoa/World Resort Beach to Managaha Island, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Approved 07/05/2023
6. Thank You Saipan Corporation	5/30/2023 SLR-2023-028	Commercial Snorkeling Activites, Helmet Diving & SCUBA Diving Operation – UBA Activites	All Designated Dive Sites & Swim Zones, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Approved 07/05/2023
7. Zen Corporation dba Aqua Marine Sports	5/30/2023 SLR-2023-034	Commercial Kayaking, Snorkeling, Hobie Cat Sailing, Stand Up Paddle Boarding & Windsurfing Activities	Achugao Beach, Lagoon & Swim Zones, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Approved 07/05/2023
8. Seahorse, Inc. Saipan dba Seahorse Tour	5/30/2023 SLR-2023-035	Commercial Banana Boat & Parasailing (Towed Flotation), & Water Jet Craft Operations	All Designated Zones, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	MSO Permit Approved – Pending Beach Concession Permit
9. Taotao Marianas, Inc.	5/30/2023 SLR-2023-036	Commercial Banana Boat & Parasailing (Towed Flotation) & Water Jet Craft Operations	All Designated Zones, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	MSO Permit Approved – Pending Beach Concession Permit
10. JB Corporation dba Saipan Fresh Adventure	5/30/2023 Revised SLR-2023-067 (Formerly SLR-2020-X-054-R4)	Commercial Snorkeling Activities	All Designated Swim Zones, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Approved 07/05/2023
11. World Corporation dba Wave Jungle	5/30/2023 SLR-2023-042	Commercial Kayaking, Snorkeling, Floaters, Stand Up Paddle Boarding & Windsurfing Activities	All Designated Swim Zones, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Approved 07/05/2023
12. Open Knowledge Systems, Inc. dba Let's Go Diving - Saipan	5/30/2023 Revised SLR-2023-075 (Formerly SLR-2021-052-R3)	Commercial SCUBA Diving Operation – UBA Activities	All Designated Dive Sites, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Approved 07/05/2023
13. Big Boy Marine Sports, Inc dba Big Boyz II Marine	5/30/2023 SLR-2023-045	Commercial Water Jet Craft & Jetboard Operations, Helmet Diving & Kayaking Activities	All Designated Zones, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	MSO Permit Approved – Pending Beach Concession Permit
14. Aqua Del Rey Saipan Incorporation	5/30/2023 Revised SLR-2023-069 (Formerly SLR-2022-064-R2)	Commercial SCUBA Diving Operation – UBA Activities	All Designated Dive Sites, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Approved 07/05/2023
15. Akhil Chandra Mollick dba Ichiban Marine Sports	5/30/2023 Revised SLR-2023-066 (Formerly SLR-2021-049-R3)	Commercial Water Jet Craft & Parasailing Operations	All Designated Zones, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Activities Under Review*
16. Akhil Chandra Mollick dba Ichiban Marine Sports	5/30/2023 SLR-2023-046	Commercial Banana Boat & Wakeboarding (Towed Floatation) Operations, Kayaking & Snorkeling Activities	All Designated Zones, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Approved 07/13/2023
17. Dive Marianas Corporation dba Dive Saipan	5/30/2023 SLR-2023-047	Commercial SCUBA Diving Operation – UBA Activities	All Designated Dive Sites, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Approved 07/03/2023
18. H2M Saipan Corporation dba H2M Saipan Dive Center	5/30/2023 Revised SLR-2023-070 (Formerly SLR-2022-041-R2)	Commercial SCUBA Diving Operation – UBA Activities	All Designated Dive Sites, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Approved 07/03/2023
19. Atty Corporation dba Dive Saipan	5/30/2023 Revised SLR-2023-071 (Formerly SLR-2023-002-R2)	Commercial Snorkeling & SCUBA Diving Operation – UBA Activities	All Designated Dive Sites & Swim Zones, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Approved 07/03/2023
20. Aquatic Marine Co., Inc. dba Aquatic Marine Sports	5/31/2023 SLR-2023-048	Commercial Banana Boat & Parasailing (Towed Floatation), Water Jet Craft Operations & Snorkeling Activities	All Designated Zones, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	STOP CLOCK* 6/20/2023
21. Marianas Sports Club, Inc. dba MSC	5/30/2023 Revised SLR-2023-068 (Formerly SLR-2023-054-R2)	Commercial SCUBA Diving Operation – UBA Activities	All Designated Dive Sites, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Approved 07/02/2023
22. Island Marine Sports, Inc.	6/7/2023 SLR-2023-055	Commercial Parasailing Operations	All Designated Zones, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	STOP CLOCK 6/12/2023
23. Selfish Saipan, Inc.	6/9/2023 SLR-2023-057	Commercial SCUBA Diving Operation – UBA Activities Sites,	All Designated Dive Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Approved* 07/03/2023
24. Saipan Dive Academy, Inc.	6/13/2023 SLR-2023-058	Commercial Snorkeling & SCUB Diving Operation – UBA Activites	All Designated Dive Sites, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Approved* 07/05/2023
25. Aquaville, Inc.	6/14/2023 SLR-2023-059	Commercial Hydrobob & SCUBA Diving Operation - UBA Activities	All Designated Dive Sites, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Activities Under Review*
26. Aquaville, Inc.	6/14/2023 SLR-2023-060	Commercial Banana Boat Operation (Towed Flotation) & Seawalker Operation- UBA Activities	Waters Fronting Kanoa/ World Resorts to Managaha Island, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Activities Under Review*
27. Auto Marine, Inc.	6/14/2023 SLR-2023-061	Commercial Banana Boat & Parasailing Operations (Towed Flotation), Seawalker Operation - UBA Activities & Snorkeling Activities	All Designated Zones, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Activities Under Review*
28. Mark Arnold L. Santos dba Macs Marine	6/14/2023 SLR-2023-062	Banana Boat & Parasailing Operations (Towed Flotation) and Seawalker - UBA Activities	All Designated Zones, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Approved*
29. Triple J Saipan, Inc.	6/15/2023 TMS-2022-035-A1	Construction of Two Barracks Unit & One Recreational Building	San Jose, Tinian	Major Siting	Application Under Review
30. Pacific Line Corporation dba Pacific Line Recycle	07/07/2023 SPlm-2023-076	Rehabilitation of Existing One-Story Warehouse Facility for Recycling Center	Lowerbase, Saipan	Ports & Industrial	Certified Complete* 07/10/2023 Approved* 07/13/2023

NMIAC §15-10-210 of the CRM Rules and Regulations requires all permit applications to be published in a newspaper for general circulation within the CNMI within 15 days of receipt of application. The list reflects recently received permit applications and those with a recent change in status. New applications are marked with an asterisk (*).

The Public is invited to submit written comments regarding any of the above projects for which a permit decision has not been issued. All permit comments should identify the project by application number. Your comments should be mailed or hand-delivered to the DCRM Office. All persons who desire a public hearing regarding any project may do so by submitting a written request for a public hearing to the DCRM Office within fourteen (14) days for minor permits (APCs) and proposed amended major sitings. Public Hearings are required for all new major siting projects. All public hearing notices are published in a local newspaper of general circulation. Residents of Rota and Tinian may submit comments and hearing requests to their local DCRM Coordinator. Persons wishing to retain the right to appeal a DCRM Permit decision must file a notice of appeal with the DCRM office within thirty (30) days of the issuance of the DCRM permit decision as provided in Part 200 § 15-10-235 of the DCRM Regulations.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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EDITORIAL

'Everyone had equal learning loss' so it's all good

Apologists for the nation's teacher unions have been busy rewriting history on school closures. Now, in some places, they're opposing efforts to bring struggling students up to speed.

The disaster of remote schooling during the pandemic has been well-documented. The Nation's Report Card recently revealed that eighth-grade reading and math test results hit their lowest levels in decades. Kids from disadvantaged backgrounds suffered the most.

It is against this backdrop that national teacher union leaders have embarked on a shameful effort to sanitize the indefensible. Despite their aggressive crusade to keep schools closed far longer than necessary, despite outrageous rhetoric warning of mass deaths and body bags, they now claim no responsibility for shuttered classrooms and the calamity that followed.

It's a crock. But it gets worse.

In its June 26 edition, The New Yorker features an essay revealing the hurdles that the education establishment in Richmond, Virginia, erected to plans for extra instruction time. The proposal would have implemented year-round schooling—cutting summer break to six weeks—in an effort to erase the learning deficit created by the disaster of remote classwork.

One member of the Richmond teachers union executive board summed up the mind-numbing indifference to the plight of those in their charge: "The whole thing about learning loss I find funny is that, if everyone was out of school, and everyone had equal learning loss, then aren't we all equal?" Melvin Hostman told the magazine. "We all have a deficit."

This is progressive "equity" at work. Never mind that Mr. Hostman doesn't know what he's talking about. The remote learning tragedy was hardly spread equally among students and will weigh down underprivileged kids the most.

But that didn't bother one school board member, who was more concerned about minority kids falling behind in leisure time. "It's not right that Black and Brown students in our district are chained to their desks essentially further into the school year," she said in opposition to adding instructional time, "while their counterparts in the counties get to play and have a summer."

Another board member shrugged at the academic setbacks brought on by school closures. "So we experienced this pandemic," she said, "and some of our students aren't performing as well from a standardized perspective. Characterizing it as learning loss looks at it from a deficit perspective. We should be looking at it as where we are now, and where we go from there."

In the end, the district, after two years, approved the extended learning plan for one—one!—of its 54 schools. But the exercise served a vital purpose by revealing that, for too many adults in the system, children and their academic well-being are deep down on the priority list.

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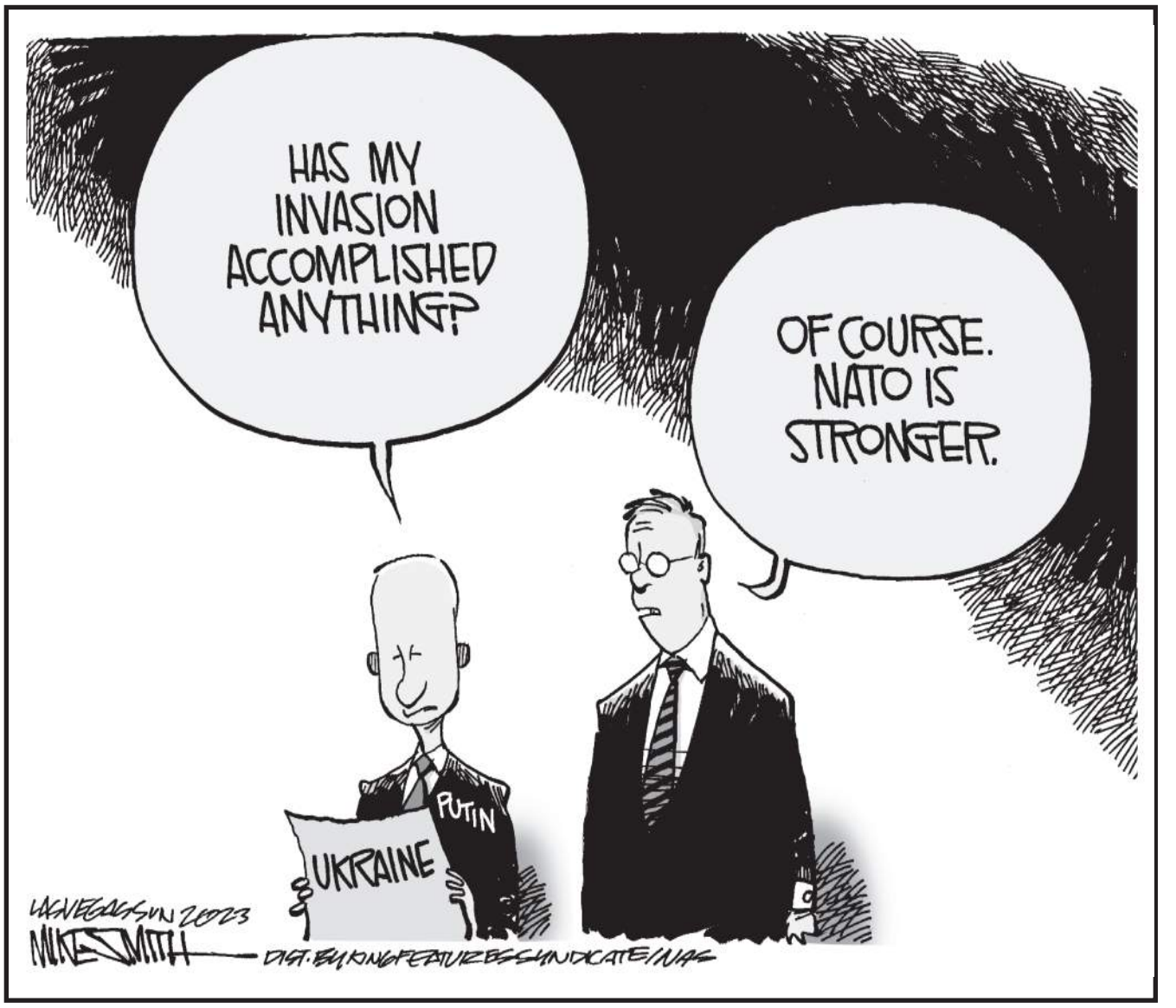


Liberation Day message

Editor's Note: The following is a message from the 17th Saipan and Northern Island Municipal Council, which is composed of Marian DLG Tudela (chairwoman); Antonia M. Tudela (vice chairwoman); and Carmen C. Pangelinan (council secretary)

This October, the 17th Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council, in cooperation with the American Memorial Park on Saipan, will hold an In Memoriam commemorative ceremony in remembrance of nearly a thousand Chamorro and Carolinian civilians who lost their lives during the fierce Battle of Saipan nearly 80 years ago in 1944. On July 4, 2024, we joined the Mayor of Saipan Liberation Day Organizing Committee to mark the opening of the gates on July 4, 1946, to Camp Susupe and Camp Chalan Kanoa when Chamorros and Carolinians were permitted by their captors to return freely to their land and lives after World War II, which, as then-Mayor David M. Apatang stated in 2019: "We never forget the past, especially what happened during World War II and in the civilian camps following the war."

On this day, let us pause and reflect on the values we so cherish and take for granted for nearly 80 years in pursuit and celebration of freedom, liberty, pursuit of happiness and exercise of self-determination as a people of our sacred Mariana islands, a place we know no other than that is home to us, and poignantly reflected in our CNMI anthem, I Tano gi halom Tasi, a place that saw nations come, and nations go, and ultimately a place the indigenous people of Islas Sinahi Pacifico have freely chosen a pathway of democracy in political relationship with the United States of America enshrined in our Covenant agreement and the CNMI Constitution of self-governance. Today, let us celebrate the Commonwealth's longstanding peace in diversity among our courageous men and women in uniform who willingly made the ultimate sacrifice, and the indigenous civilian brothers and sisters whose lives were untimely taken for the freedom, liberty, and pursuit of happiness of peace loving citizens and guests, emanating from the island people's free exercise of self-determination in making our Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands achieve the quality of life anchored in the host culture of our island traditions, customs, values, and sense of place.

Caught in a war not of their making, the people of Northern Marianas, like other civilians in the Pacific, became victims of war brought upon them. The Marianas Memorial at American Memorial Park on Saipan, for instance, honors Chamorros and Carolinians who lost their lives as a result of this war, and war-related casualties suffered by the people during the massive aerial bombardment on Saipan 78 years ago on June 11, 1944, and the closure of the civilian Camp Susupe and Camp Chalan Kanoa that followed, the official internment camps which housed both civilian citizens and foreign combatants as prisoners of war immediately after World War II, until islanders on Saipan were liberated at the eventful hour 78 years to this fourth day of July in 1946. The liberation of island civilians from Saipan's Camp Susupe and Camp Chalan Kanoa conjures both painful and joyful memories and remembrance, that we shall not forget, yet we honor and celebrate today 77 years later as a day of remembrance, strength, resolve, determination and renewal in rightful affirmation of the place that is home, our islands, and our heritage interconnected throughout the Marianas Islas SinahiPacifico!

May this 77th Liberation Day be a harbinger of lasting hope, lasting peace, and prosperity for the islands, the islanders and the island citizens, including guests to the islands.

From this day forward, therefore, let us re-double our effort and our commitment in reaching out to others and educating others about our Islands and our Heritage, as we did 77 years ago, and today, as we continue to hold the torch in celebration of July 4th, and our unending celebration of our islands and our heritage, tomorrow.

May our commitment as island people and citizens remain unabated, grow stronger, and continually renewed for generations to forever reign in our individual and collective thoughts and action in remembrance of our dearly departed civilians caught in a war not of their making, but nonetheless perished for the cause of freedom, liberty, pursuit of happiness and exercise of self-determination that we all enjoy today and share with others, too. In honor and remembrance of the fallen; the islanders who suffered compulsory detention in Camp Susupe and Camp Chalan Kanoa; our island leaders who led the pathway to our political relationship with the United States of America yesterday, and one that has withstood the test of time today on this liberation day, and that may we all cherish our island traditions, customs, values, and sense of place tomorrow as heritage islanders and Americans, too.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

The lasting threat is not the 'next Trump,' but the MAGA base

By MILES TAYLOR
Los Angeles Times

Miles Taylor is a former chief of staff of the Department of Homeland Security in the Trump administration. This article is an adapted excerpt from his book Blowback: A Warning to Save Democracy from the Next Trump, *which will be published July 18.*

The state-by-state MAGA takeover of the Republican Party machinery, underway since 2021, will make it easier for the "next Trump" to emerge. But what will actually propel such a figure into the White House is the transformation of the GOP base.

The increasingly reactionary views of grassroots Republicans virtually guarantee that the movement will maintain its dominant influence on the party for the foreseeable future.

A yard sign I saw in rural Pennsylvania during the 2020 presidential campaign tells the story. Planted in front of a house was a homemade poster with the words "RONALD REAGAN IS A LOSER." President Reagan's face was crossed out with an X, with Donald Trump's smiling face next to it. Presumably this was a Trump supporter, but why attack Reagan? The 40th president was beloved by Republicans, not on the ballot, long dead and certainly not a threat to Trump. The last assumption is where I was wrong.

Trump fixated on his predecessors and so have his supporters.

"You go around Pennsylvania and you see Trump signs everywhere," he once tweeted, quoting a supporter. "The Donald Trump situation is bigger than the Reagan Revolution. Donald Trump has inspired us."

On another occasion: "94% Approval Rating in the Republican Party, an all time high. Ronald Reagan was 87%. Thank you!"

And again: "Wow, highest Poll Numbers in the history of the Republican Party. That includes Honest Abe Lincoln and Ronald Reagan. There must be something wrong, please recheck that poll!"

To be seen as powerful enough to restore the country to what it was, Trump requires that others see him as equal to, or greater than, those who came before him. I used to think such comparisons were a farcical insecurity. Now I believe Donald Trump was understating the comparison. In truth, there is no comparison. He created a cult unlike any of his predecessors, inspiring throngs of supporters to create deeply personal—sometimes spiritual—connections with his movement.

Tribalism is as strong as it's ever been within the Republican Party. Whether or not Trump remains the tribal leader, the power of group loyalty has radicalized the base. Tens of millions of people now believe conspiracy theories that are provably false, a reality that will shape the American political system in unknowable ways for many years to come.

In the summer of 2022, former Republican congressman Reid Ribble did a test. He was a founder of the Tea Party movement, though he was disillusioned by Trump. Speaking to a group of several hundred churchgoers in Wisconsin, he decided to poll the congregation.

"How many of you believe the 2020 election was stolen from Donald Trump?" Ribble asked.

A sea of hands went up. It was almost the entire room. Ribble disguised his shock by shifting to a second question, which he hoped would cause most of the hands to go down.

"And how many of you believe Donald Trump is still the rightful president of the United States?"

Some hands dropped, but roughly half the room kept their arms in the air. It was worse than he had realized.

"Populism—in almost all of its historical iterations—tends toward authoritarianism," Ribble told me. The test with the congregation reminded him of another dark period in history: pre-Nazi Germany. In the 1920s, Adolf Hitler rose to power on a Big Lie. He alleged that Germany had been on the path to victory in World War I, but its leaders surrendered prematurely. Victory was seized from Germans by corrupt politicians, Hitler said. The people had been "stabbed in the back."

In reality, the German military had been defeated and the country had no hope of winning the war; nevertheless, millions believed Hitler's lie amid the harsh conditions of postwar life, from political gridlock to inflation. Anxious Germans welcomed the rise of a disruptor who could upend the institutions they believed had failed them, paving the way for Nazism. "He created a whole class of victims," Ribble said, "and then he told them he would vanquish the villain."

Ribble worries Trump's lies have created an opening for another dangerous leader to rise—or for Trump's return to the Oval Office. The untruths have created an angry and restless electorate.

In poll after poll, a majority of Republican voters say that Joe Biden was not the winner of the 2020 election. As one of the officials appointed by the Trump White House to oversee election security during his administration, I can confirm (once again) that this is entirely false. The 2020 election was the most secure in modern history. Yet such attestations have failed.

In the aftermath of the Trump presidency, GOP-dominated legislatures in more than 30 states have put forward or passed measures to make it easier to interfere in the vote in the GOP's favor, teeing up the possibility of legal war in future elections.

This isn't the only falsehood reshaping the system.

An Economist/YouGov survey last year found that half of American Republicans now believe in core QAnon concepts, such as the assertion that a single group of people "secretly . . . rule the world" and that "top Democrats are involved in elite child sex-trafficking rings."

GOP leaders have fanned the flames of these theories. The No. 3 House Republican, Elise Stefanik, referred to Democrats as "pedo grifters" in 2022, and the party has backed candidates who were open QAnon believers.

Likewise, millions of Republicans subscribe to the Trump-fueled Great Replacement Theory. The conspiracy alleges that the Democratic Party is attempting to "replace the current electorate" of white Americans with "Third World" voters, as former Fox News host Tucker Carlson claimed. A gunman cited this race-baiting theory in a manifesto before murdering nearly a dozen black Americans in a New York supermarket in 2022, not to mention the mass shooter who killed nearly two dozen people in an El Paso Walmart in 2019, echoing Trump's words about an "invasion" at the U.S. southern border. An AP/NORC poll found nearly half of Republicans believed in the theory.

It would be willful delusion to think these conspiracy theories won't have lasting repercussions. These highly motivated voters are hungry for MAGA candidates who share their views. And such views will not change overnight. The next Trump will have to feed this beast to win, which means keeping the base radicalized on a steady diet of conspiracy theories about existential threats to their way of life.

"There's a soft totalitarianism coming into play," said Michael Steele, who spent two years leading the GOP as chairman of the Republican National Committee. "Modern-day conservatism meant lower taxes, less government, free markets. What we are witnessing now is a deconstruction of that. I think the rational side is losing, if not having already lost."

We've only seen the beginning of Trumpism. The rational faction of the GOP has been put down by the radical one and is no longer a check on the system. The disgraced ex-president may return to power. Meanwhile, the conditions are right for the next Trump to emerge. Worse still for our democracy, when he or she enters the White House, the rest of democracy's guardrails will be weaker than ever.

Farmers deserve to be able to control what they grow

By ANTHONY PAHNKE
Progressive Perspectives

Anthony Pahnke is the vice president of Family Farm Defenders and an associate professor of international relations at San Francisco State University in San Francisco. This column was produced for Progressive Perspectives, a project of The Progressive *magazine, and distributed by Tribune News Service.*

My grandma calls him the "seed man."

He used to come by our farm outside of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin every year, trying to persuade us to buy the latest variety of corn and wheat seeds. If the "seed man" didn't have something we liked, then there were the options at the local grain elevator where we milled our corn. We also grew and saved seeds, especially for sunflowers, pumpkins and tomatoes.

My family, like others in our community, recognized the power of seeds.

As important as rain and healthy soil is for farming, we also need access to diverse seed varieties so that we can experiment to see what works and control our production.

A new bill, The Seeds and Breeds for the Future Act, would help lower seed prices and make genetic diversity more of a priority. The act was introduced by Sens. Baldwin, D-Wis., Martin Heinrich, D-N.M., Tina Smith, D-Minn., John Fetterman, D-Pa. and Ron Wyden, D-Ore., and is supported by dozens of farmer groups and their allies.

In terms of details, the bill dedicates $75 million in USDA research grants for the development of new public seeds and animal breeds, focusing especially on those that are regionally adapted and bred for environmental resilience. It would also create a special coordinator position that would strategize with farmers and other public stakeholders on what to research and how to increase genetic diversity .

Given the negative impact that corporate consolidation has had on our food and farm system, this legislation is critical. Researchers, for example, have found that increasing consolidation makes supply chains susceptible to breakdown, while also allowing corporations the power to manipulate prices and collude with competitors.

Concerning seeds specifically, the Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration has highlighted that four firms—Bayer (including Monsanto), BASF, Corteva Agriscience and ChemChina-Syngenta—control more than two-thirds of commercial seed and pesticide sales worldwide.

That the USDA reports seed costs rising more than 700% between 2000 and 2015 for genetically modified seeds, and more than 200% for non-genetically modified seeds during that same time, shouldn't come as a surprise. This, in part, also explains the persistently high food prices we've seen this year, as rising input costs—of which seeds are a part—are passed off from farmers to consumers.

Corporations take more than their fair share at both ends of the food supply chain, while consumers and farmers struggle.

The Biden administration has taken these concerns seriously by creating a task force in March with members from the USDA, Patent and Trademark Office, Department of Justice and Federal Trade Commission to research intellectual property rights and monopolization in the seed and agricultural input sector.

As we wait for the task force's recommendations, our legislators could place The Seeds and Breeds for the Future Act into the Farm Bill, which is slated to expire later in 2023. Concretely, the act could be included into the lesser known, yet critically important research title of the Farm Bill that is currently moving its way through the U.S. House and Senate.

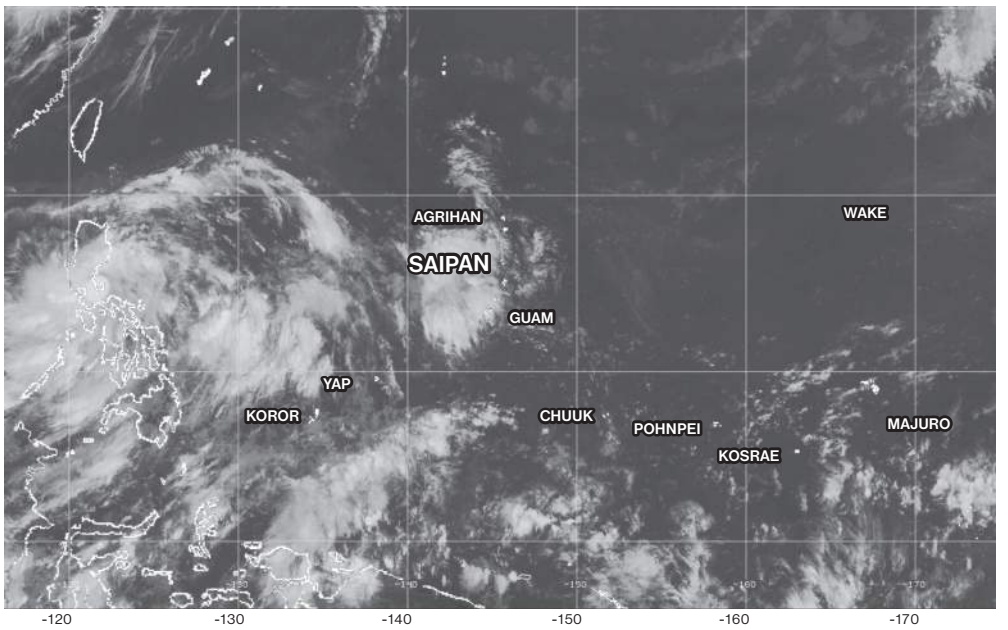
While the seed man who used to come by our farm is gone, what he represents remains: the importance of competition and local control in our food system. Farmers must regain some of the power to grow what they want, as they also struggle to face what climate change and the market throws their way. Let's hope that our legislators pay heed before it's too late.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Partly sunny with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly sunny with a 30 percent chance of showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms.	Mostly cloudy with a 40 percent chance of showers.	Partly sunny with a 20 percent chance of showers.
86° 79°	85° 79°	85° 79°	85° 78°	85° 78°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:36 AM, THURSDAY, JULY 13, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Guam Doppler weather radar shows widely scattered showers near and east of the islands, with scattered to numerous showers west of the islands, especially west of the coastal waters. The Ipan buoy reveals combined seas of 3 to 4 feet composed mainly of east trade-wind swell with a little wind wave mixed in.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorm	86° / 79°
Palau	Thunderstorm	83° / 77°
Yap	Thunderstorm	85° / 79°
Chuuk	Thunderstorm	87° / 79°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorm	88° / 76°
Kosrae	Thunderstorm	88° / 76°
Majuro	Thunderstorm	86° / 82°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	5:54 AM	6:51 PM
Saturday	5:54 AM	6:51 PM
Sunday	5:54 AM	6:51 PM
Monday	5:55 AM	6:51 PM
Tuesday	5:55 AM	6:50 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	2:33 AM	3:58 PM	-
Saturday	3:22 AM	4:53 PM	-
Sunday	4:13 AM	5:47 PM	-
Monday	5:06 AM	6:38 PM	-
Tuesday	6:00 AM	7:24 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	59° / 45°
Beijing	Showers	79° / 72°
Hong Kong	Thunderstorm	88° / 81°
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	87° / 75°
London	Partly Cloudy	77° / 57°
Los Angeles	Sunny	87° / 71°
Manila	Thunderstorm	84° / 77°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	54° / 36°
Miami	Thunderstorm	88° / 81°
New York	Mostly Sunny	85° / 70°
Osaka	Cloudy	90° / 79°
Paris	Mostly Cloudy	79° / 61°
Busan	Partly Cloudy	84° / 75°
Rome	Sunny	88° / 72°
Salem	Thunderstorm	93° / 73°
San Francisco	Sunny	66° / 58°
Seoul	Showers	84° / 75°
Tokyo	Thunderstorm	90° / 77°
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	89° / 70°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY	FEET	
3:55 AM	High Tide	2.02
11:44 AM	Low Tide	0.02
7:13 PM	High Tide	1.87
11:56 PM	Low Tide	1.51

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JULY 1, 2023

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:50AM	10:30AM	Daily
UA156	7:10PM	7:55PM	1, 4

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:25AM	9:55AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily
UA193	6:55PM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:15PM	9:10PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/703	4:20AM	10:35PM	1, 4, 5, 7 via ICN
UA117/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

7C3467	3:00AM	7:10AM	Daily up to July 20
TW308	3:15AM	7:00AM	Daily
OZ626	4:20AM	7:55AM	Daily
7C3403	4:45AM	8:35AM	Daily
TW9308	4:45AM	8:45AM	1, 5 July 17 to Aug 18
7C3405	4:10PM	7:45PM	Daily

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:50AM	Daily
UA112	5:15PM	6:05PM	1, 4

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	1:50AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:25PM	4:25AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA189	10:25PM	6:10AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
PR110	10:30PM	4:25AM+1	Daily
UA192	11:50PM	5:35AM+1	2, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174 via Guam	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7
UA192/174	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA184/174	11:50PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3406	9:30AM	3:10PM	Daily
7C3468	8:20PM	1:50AM+1	Daily up to July 19
TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	Daily
OZ625	9:25PM	2:55AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
TW9307	10:00PM	3:45AM+1	6, 4 July 23 to Aug 20
7C3405	10:10PM	3:40AM+1	Daily

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	16:30	17:00	Daily

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

GUAM ASSIGNMENT
SPC Ryan Babauta from Saipan, who is a 368th Military Police Company soldier, is currently in Guam attached to the 797 Engineer Company and is assisting with repairing people's homes after Typhoon Mawar.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

SBA center in Guam to relocate

SACRAMENTO, Calif— The U.S. Small Business Administration will relocate its Guam Business Recovery Center from the SBA Guam branch office to the University of Guam Pacific SBDC beginning Monday, July 17, at 9am.

"SBA customer service representatives and Guam SBDC counselors will now be available at the center to meet with business owners to explain how an SBA disaster loan can help finance their recovery," said director Tanya N. Garfield of the SBA's Disaster Field Operations Center-West yesterday. "They will answer questions about SBA's disaster loan program, explain the application process and help each business owner complete their electronic loan application," Garfield said.

SBA opened the BRC to provide personalized assistance to Guam businesses affected by Typhoon Mawar that occurred May 22 — 29.

Garfield said that Guam SBDC business counselors are available to provide business assistance to clients on a wide variety of matters designed to help small business owners re-establish their operations, overcome the effects of the disaster and plan for their future. Services include assessing business working capital needs, evaluating the business's strength, cash flow projections, and review options with the business owner to help them evaluate their alternatives and make decisions that are appropriate for their situation.

No appointment is necessary.

SBA's Guam Business Recovery Center in Hagatna will permanently close on Friday, June 14, at 6pm, and move to the Pacific SBDC site at the Jesus & Eugenia Leon Guerrero Business and Public Administration Building of the University of Guam starting Monday, July 17, at 9am. Regular hours from Mondays to Fridays, 9am to 6pm.

According to Garfield, businesses of any size and private, nonprofit organizations may borrow up to $2 million to repair or replace damaged or destroyed real estate, machinery and equipment, inventory, and other business assets. These loans cover losses that are not fully covered by insurance or other recoveries.

For small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, small businesses engaged in aquaculture, and most private, nonprofit organizations of any size, SBA offers Economic Injury Disaster Loans to help meet working capital needs caused by the disaster. Economic Injury Disaster Loan assistance is available regardless of whether the business suffered any property damage.

For business owners who are unable to visit the Business Recovery Center, they may apply online using SBA's secure website at https://disasterloanassistance.sba.gov/.

SBA representatives also continue to meet with business owners and residents at disaster recovery centers located throughout the impacted area. For a list of locations, or to receive additional disaster assistance information, visit SBA's website at www.sba.gov/disaster. Applicants may also call SBA's Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955 or email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov for more information. For people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability, please dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunications relay services. Completed applications should be mailed to U.S. Small Business Administration, Processing and Disbursement Center, 14925 Kingsport Road, Fort Worth, TX 76155.

The deadline to apply for property damage is July 27, 2023. The deadline to apply for economic injury is Feb. 28, 2024. ***(PR)***

COSMETOLOGIST: K'S INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION. SAIPAN, CNMI

Keep work stations clean and sanitize tools, such as scissors and combs. Bleach, dye, or tint hair, using applicator or brush. Cut, trim and shape hair or hairpieces, based on customers' instructions, hair type and facial features, using clippers, scissors, trimmers and razors. Schedule client appointments. Update and maintain customer information records, such as beauty services provided. Demonstrate and sell hair care products and cosmetics. Analyze patrons' hair and other physical features to determine and recommend beauty treatment or suggest hair styles. Shampoo, rinse, condition, and dry hair and scalp or hairpieces with water, liquid soap, or other solutions. Order, display, and maintain supplies. Comb, brush, and spray hair or wigs to set style. Develop new styles and techniques. Apply water, setting, straightening or waving solutions to hair and use curlers, rollers, hot combs and curling irons to press and curl hair. Shape eyebrows and remove facial hair, using depilatory cream, tweezers, electrolysis or wax. Administer therapeutic medication and advise patron to seek medical treatment for chronic or contagious scalp conditions. Recommend and explain the use of cosmetics, lotions, and creams to soften and lubricate skin and enhance and restore natural appearance. Clean, shape, and polish fingernails and toenails, using files and nail polish. Give facials to patrons, using special compounds, such as lotions and creams. Train or supervise other hairstylists, hairdressers and assistants. Operate cash registersto receive payments from patrons.

Minimum Requirements: High School diploma and 12 months experience required.
Salary: $ 7.88 - $8.00 per hour.

Workplace: SAN JOSE VILLAGE Saipan, CNMI

To apply: Please send your resume to
K'S INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION., PO BOX
501981, Saipan, MP 96950 or e-mail to kssalon96950@gmail.com
Job Number – KS-2023-01

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 23-087

Opening Date: Monday, July 3, 2023
Closing Date: Monday, July 17, 2023

POSITION TITLE:	**Training & Development Administrator**
DEPARTMENT:	**Executive Director / Administration Office**
LOCATION:	**Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA**
ANNUAL SALARY:	**$45,326.00 to $61,190.00 per annum, Exempt**
CONTRACT:	**Contracted**
POSITION(S):	**One (1)**

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Executive Director or his/her designee. The individual will oversee organizational units and make programmatic decisions on behalf of the unit organization-wide across all locations. Such decisions will provide context for the work to be accomplished by subordinates supervised within the unit and/or designated programs managed. The incumbent is responsible for the management of functions and budget associated with an assigned unit/designated program and may be responsible for the supervision of professional, technical and administrative support staff assigned to the unit. Based upon assignment, the incumbent may administer units/designated programs with administrative functions requiring differing levels of risk to the organization while providing for the across-the-board first level management necessary to execute the process and projects of the organization. As assigned, the incumbent will supervise staff including conducting performance evaluations, coordinating training, and implementing hiring, discipline, and termination procedures.

Duties:

- Manages the functions of the training and development program, which includes planning, coordinating, administering, and evaluating programs, projects, processes, procedures, systems, standards, and/or services. Ensures compliance with organizational and Federal, Commonwealth, and local laws, regulations, codes, and/or standards.
- Serves as a liaison with internal departments, officials, agencies, partners, contractors and other external organizations, groups and representatives. Serves as a representative at a variety of meetings, public events, on committees, and/or other related events regarding services, programs, or projects.
- Analyzes training needs to develop new training programs or modifies and improves existing programs.
- Plans, develops, and provides training and staff development programs, using knowledge of the effectiveness of methods such as classroom training, demonstrations, on-the-job trainings, meetings, conferences, and workshops.
- Prepares training budget for departments or organization.
- Confers with management and conducts surveys to identify training needs based on projected production processes, changes, and other factors.
- Develops and organizes training manuals, multimedia visual aids, and other educational materials.
- Develops testing and evaluation procedures.
- Trains instructors and supervisors in techniques and skills for training and dealing with employees.
- Conducts orientation sessions and arranges on-the-job training for new hires.
- Conducts or arranges for ongoing technical training and personnel development classes for staff members.
- Reviews and evaluates training and apprenticeship programs for compliance with government standards.
- Assists in planning, developing, recommending and implementing goals, objectives, policies, procedures, and standards. Coordinates operational and program efforts in alignment with goals and objectives of assigned area of responsibility.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:
Education: Bachelor's Degree in a directly related field and three (3) years of professional experience in assigned field including one (1) year of leadership experience; or, an equivalent combination of education and experience sufficient to successfully perform the essential duties of the job such as those listed above, unless otherwise subject to any other requirements set forth in law or regulation. As assigned, a Master's Degree in a related field and/or specific certifications/licensure may be required.

Knowledge of: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth State and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances; Managerial principles, practices and techniques; Principles, practices, methods and techniques of assigned operational area or function; Budgeting principles, Contract administration principles; Customer service principles; Modern office equipment; Modern office technology.

Skills in: Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, rules, regulations and standards; Managing, monitoring, training and evaluating staff; Prioritizing, coordinating, allocating resources and assigning work; Planning, organizing, and implementing programs and services; Establishing goals, objectives, and standards; Recommending, developing and implementing policies and procedures; Providing technical review, expertise and oversight related to assigned area; Monitoring and implementing quality, compliance and/or safety procedures and processes; Preparing contract documents; Providing contract administration; Researching and analyzing information; Resolving problems and conflict; Developing budget and monitoring compliance; Preparing reports, presentations and other related materials; Delivering presentations and training; Overseeing customer service delivery; Serving as a liaison and technical representative of assigned area; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

- **Licensing:**
  - Valid CNMI Driver's License with appropriate class.
- **Physical Demands:**
  - Occasionally required to lift and/or move up to 10 pounds and occasionally lift and/or move up to 20 pounds.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday to Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org.

P. O. Box 501220, Third Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-4282 • Fax: (670) 235-5131
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COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-23-025

AGAG BOOSTER PUMP AND ELECTRICAL SYSTEM UPGRADE

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Construction of Agag Booster Pump and Electrical System Upgrade in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project consists of upgrading the existing Agag Booster Pump Station (AG); rehabilitation of existing Agag concrete sump tank, yard piping, aboveground flowmeter and valve station with concrete pad, and all other appurtenances at the Agag site; renovation of the existing chlorine and electrical building; installation of a new booster pump (triplex system); construction of a new perimeter security fencing and facility lighting at the Agag site; and site improvements and grading. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system. CUC requires the Project to be completed in 185 calendar days from date of award of contract.

The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on **July 12, 2023 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies of the bid MUST be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-23-025, Agag Booster Pump and Electrical System Upgrade"** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) August 2, 2023,** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

A *Bid Guarantee* of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety.

A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract. Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 a.m. (ChST) on July 17, 2023** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Dennis Formalejo, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer via email address dennis.formalejo@cucgov.org and Christie L. Sablan, CUC P&S, Senior Administrative Technician via address christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

BETTINA G. TERLAJE
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Business

Joeten Superstore to give away 200 hotdogs on Saturday

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Joeten Superstore is giving away more than three times the number of hotdogs competitive eater Joey Chestnut devoured last July 4 in Coney Island.

This as the company is celebrating National Hotdog Month tomorrow, July 15, by giving away 200 of their lip-smacking Kirkland Signature 100% All Beef Franks.

Joeten Superstore's Jason Sablan said they will start serving at 12pm and the promotion is limited to one hotdog per customer. No purchase is necessary and the free hotdogs will be given away while supplies last.

"Joeten Superstore will be giving away 200 hotdogs in honor of National Hotdog Day on July 19, 2023. July is National Hotdog Month," he said.

Kirkland Signature 100% All Beef Franks don't contain any by-products like corn syrups, phosphates, fillers, or artificial colors or flavors. The franks, along with the buns are steamed and served wrapped in tin foil, added Sablan.

Joeten Superstore hotdogs are served plain and customers can choose their condiment of choice.

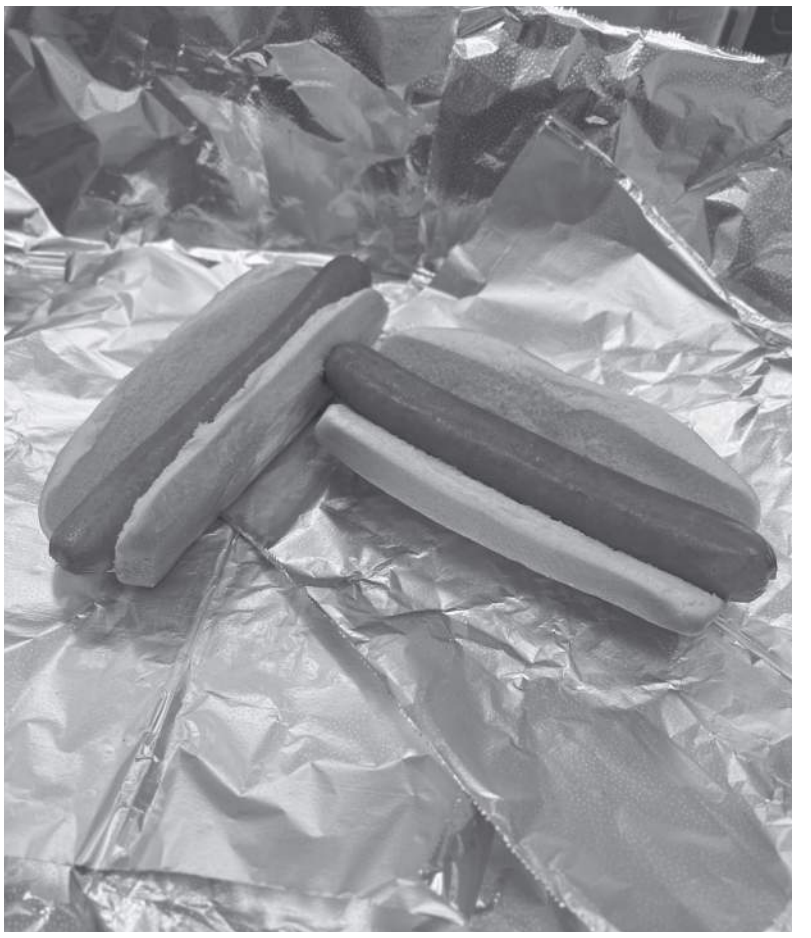
"We have a variety of condiments to choose from and what will be offered is based upon availability. The following being: ketchup, mayo, mustard, tabasco, and relish," he said.

In addition to the free wieners, Joeten Superstore will also be giving away a free churro for every hotdog combo purchase (two hotdogs and one drink). The hotdog combo plus one churro promo is also available while supplies last.

"We would like to thank the community for their continued support and patronage over the past 28 years. Joeten Superstore opened its doors on May 5, 1995 and it has been a pleasure serving the entire CNMI community. Thank you to our customers on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota," said Sablan.

Saipan Tribune advertising manager Donna Rivera said she will definitely celebrate National Hotdog Day by lining up for one of her favorite snacks.

MARK RABAGO
The crew of the snack bar at Joeten Superstore is all smiles while serving their combo hotdog.



MARK RABAGO
Joeten Superstore serves Kirkland Signature 100% All Beef Franks.

"I would like to get one. I will be there to line up."

Ditto for Lito Lumbana, who works as a cook at American Pizza & Grill.

"My family loves the hotdogs at Joeten and for so many years like 15 to 18 years we've been eating and buying there," he said.

Lilian Datangel will most certainly join Rivera and Lumbana in the queue.

"I love their combo hotdogs. They're my favorite to buy at Joeten Superstore so I'm willing to line up tomorrow," she said.

According to the internet, National Hotdog Day is celebrated on the third Wednesday in July.

The National Hot Dog and Sausage Council established National Hot Dog Day in 1991 to coincide with a hot dog lunch on Capitol Hill.

MARK RABAGO
The Joeten Superstore snack bar is always a local favorite on island.

China exports slumped 12.4% in June as global demand weakened

HONG KONG (AP)—China's exports tumbled 12.4% in June from a year earlier as demand weakened after central banks raised interest rates to curb inflation even as Chinese leaders struggled to keep a post-COVID recovery from faltering.

Customs data released Thursday showed imports slid 6.8% to $214.7 billion. Exports edged up slightly from the month before, totaling $285.3 billion. The trade surplus was $70.6 billion, rising from $65.8 billion in May.

Trade weakness adds to downward pressure on the world's second-largest economy. Global consumer demand has weakened after the Federal Reserve and central banks in Europe and Asia raised interest rates to bring inflation down from near multi-decade highs by reining in business and consumer activity.

In January-June, China's total trade including imports and exports fell nearly 5% from a year earlier. Exports slipped 3.2% and imports declined 6.7% as prices of commodities like oil fell and demand inside China also faltered.

Exports to the United States tumbled 23.7% from a year earlier to $42.7 billion, a six-month low, while imports of American goods sank 4.1% to $14 billion. China's politically volatile trade surplus with the United States narrowed by 30.6% to $28.7 billion.

Trade also has been dampened by tension with Washington and restrictions on access to U.S. processor chips and other technology in a feud with Beijing over security and Chinese industrial policy. Chinese factories assemble most of the world's smartphones and other electronics.

Inflation drops to 3% and Biden hopes to turn weakness into strength

WASHINGTON (AP)—The politics of inflation took a sharp turn Wednesday with a report showing consumer prices rose at the slowest pace since the early months of Joe Biden's presidency.

Republicans have hammered Biden over the cost of groceries, gasoline, utilities and more, saying his $1.9 trillion pandemic relief package and push for electric vehicles were responsible for pushing inflation to a four-decade high. The GOP argument has resonated with voters, but the report on consumer prices for June suggests that inflation has eased dramatically without any of the job losses that some economists and Republican leaders said would occur.

Prices have risen just 3% from a year ago, compared with 9.1% in June 2022, and it's the lowest reading since March 2021.

Unlike a year ago, inflation is mainly coming from a government measure of shelter based on what it would cost to rent a home. This makes the inflation argument somewhat nuanced as data from AP VoteCast, a sweeping survey of the national electorate, shows that the majority of voters last year — 83% of Republicans and 73% of Democrats — own their homes and are largely insulated from higher rental prices.

Biden's team was quick to seize on the inflation report as proof that its policies are delivering results. Defying expectations that Federal Reserve efforts to combat inflation would cause layoffs, the unemployment rate is healthy at 3.6%.

"Inflation is down by two-thirds over the past year," said Jared Bernstein, chair of the White House Council of Economic Advisers. "It is particularly notable and highly consistent with Bidenomics to see this steep a decline in the rate of inflation while employment remains so uniquely strong."

The president was quick to take credit, with the White House issuing a statement from him: "Good jobs and lower costs: That's Bidenomics in action."

Sen. Rick Scott, R-Fla., said Biden was "delusional" for saying his policies are helping U.S. families.

Nation

Biden closing out trip by showcasing new NATO member Finland

HELSINKI (AP)—President Joe Biden will close out his five-day trip to Europe on Thursday standing alongside Nordic leaders in an effort to show NATO's expanding power and influence against a burgeoning Russia.

The brief stop in the shoreline Finnish capital is the coda to a Biden tour that was carefully sketched to highlight the growth of the military alliance that the president says has fortified itself since the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Finland joined as NATO's newest member earlier this year, an entry that effectively doubled the alliance's border with Russia.

Biden arrived in Helsinki after what he deemed a successful annual NATO summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, where allies agreed to language that would further pave the way for Ukraine to join the military alliance. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called the summit's outcome "a significant security victory" for his country but nonetheless expressed disappointment Kyiv did not get an outright invitation to join NATO.

Biden and other administration officials also held what aides said were pivotal conversations with Ankara shortly before Turkey reversed course and dropped its objections to Sweden joining NATO.

"I'm feeling good about the trip," Biden told reporters shortly before boarding Air Force One for Finland. "You know, we accomplished every goal we set out to accomplish."

The president's trip this week — a meticulously choreographed endeavor meant to showcase international opposition to Russian leader Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine — played out nearly five years to the day since then-President Donald Trump infamously stood alongside Putin in Helsinki and cast doubt on his own intelligence apparatus. That was just days after Trump tore through a NATO summit where he disparaged the alliance and from which he threatened to withdraw the United States.

In contrast, Biden has heartily embraced the tenets of multilateralism that Trump shunned, speaking repeatedly of having to rebuild international coalitions after four tumultuous years led by his predecessor. The garrulous former Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman is in his element at summits abroad, and speaks of how his background in international policy is proof positive that decades of experience on the world stage has mattered for the presidency.

While in Finland, Biden will meet with the country's president, Sauli Niinistö, as well as leaders from other Nordic nations including Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland. Sweden is poised to join NATO as its 32nd member country after it pledged that it would cooperate more with Turkey on counterterrorism efforts while backing Ankara's bid to join the European Union.

Biden is also scheduled to hold a press conference with Niinistö before departing for Washington.

Black Lives Matter movement to mark 10 years of activism

By AARON MORRISON
AP NATIONAL WRITER

The Black Lives Matter movement hits a milestone on Thursday, marking 10 years since its 2013 founding in response to the acquittal of the man who fatally shot 17-year-old Trayvon Martin.

Gunned down in a Florida gated community where his father lived in 2012, Martin was one of the earliest symbols of a movement that now wields influence in politics, law enforcement and broader conversations about racial progress in and outside the U.S.

BLM activists and organizations plan to mark a decade of the movement with in-person and virtual events. Calls to action include a renewed push to defund police departments and reinvest in Black communities that have suffered disproportionately from police brutality, unequal treatment in criminal justice systems and mass incarceration.

In the wake of Supreme Court decisions that stymied relief from student loan debt held disproportionately by Black borrowers and banned affirmative action in higher education, the need for BLM's existence couldn't be more clear, said prominent movement activist Melina Abdullah.

"What this movement moment means is that we have to absolutely redouble our efforts and redouble our commitment to making Black lives matter," said Abdullah, who is a director of BLM Grassroots Inc, a collective of organizers across the country.

"Ten years in, we're getting a glimpse at what would happen if there were no Black Lives Matter," she said. "We're not just going to fight when it's popular, but we're going to fight because we need to fight."

Dangerous heat wave baking US Southwest

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)—After a historically wet winter and a cloudy spring, California's summer was in full swing Thursday as a heat wave that's been scorching much of the U.S. Southwest brings triple digit temperatures and an increased risk of wildfires.

Blistering conditions will build Friday and throughout the weekend in the central and southern parts of California, where many residents should prepare for the hottest weather of the year, the National Weather Service warned.

Midday highs were mostly expected to be above 100 degrees (37.7 C), and desert areas could reach 120 (48.8 C), forecasters said. Little relief was expected overnight, when temperatures could remain in the 80s (above 26.6 C). An excessive heat watch was in effect through Sunday for interior Los Angeles, Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties.

"Please plan accordingly, this is not the time to be hiking or be outside for long durations," the weather service's LA office said on Twitter. "If you need to work outside, shift hours to the early morning, take frequent breaks and hydrate!"

Employers were reminded to adhere to regulations that require outdoor workers are given water, shade and regular breaks to cool off. The state will be performing spot checks at work sites to make sure the rules are being followed, said Jeff Killip with the Division of Occupational Safety & Health.

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Asia

‘Nukes put region miscalculation away from catastrophe’

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—Indonesia's top diplomat warned Tuesday of the threat posed by nuclear weapons, saying that Southeast Asia is “one miscalculation away from apocalypse” and pressing for world powers to sign a treaty to keep the region free from such arms.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi raised the alarm ahead of a two-day summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which started later Tuesday in Jakarta. The agenda would spotlight Myanmar’s deadly civil strife, continuing tensions in the South China Sea and efforts to fortify regional economies amid the global headwinds set off by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

Later in the week, the 10-nation bloc will meet Asian and Western counterparts, including U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Chinese foreign policy overseer Wang Yi.

The U.S.-China rivalry is not formally on ASEAN’s agenda but looms large over the meetings of the bloc, an often-unwieldy collective of democracies, autocracies and monarchies, with some members split over allegiances either to Washington or Beijing.

“We cannot be truly safe with nuclear weapons in our region,” Marsudi told fellow ASEAN ministers. “With nuclear weapons, we are only one miscalculation away from apocalypse and global catastrophe.”

In 1995, ASEAN states signed a treaty that declared Southeast Asia’s commitment to be a nuclear weapon-free zone, one of five in the world. However, Marsudi lamented that none of the world’s leading nuclear powers have signed on to the pact and called for renewed efforts to convince those states to sign up.

“The threat is imminent, so we can no longer play a waiting game,” she said.

A draft communique expected on Wednesday mentions the possibility of a first nuclear weapons state finally signing the treaty but says that there would have to be written assurances that the treaty was being ratified "without reservations.” A copy of the draft was obtained by The Associated Press.

The communique did not identify the prospective state. However, two Southeast Asian diplomats attending the Jakarta meetings told the AP it was China. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the issue publicly.

Meanwhile, Myanmar’s generals have again been banned from attending the ASEAN summit for refusing to ease a deadly civil strife sparked by the military’s seizure of power more than two years ago.

ASEAN has been under international pressure to address the crisis in Myanmar since the army seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in February 2021 and plunged the country into deadly chaos.

More than 3,750 civilians, including pro-democracy activists, have been killed by security forces and nearly 24,000 arrested since the military takeover, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, a rights group that keeps tallies of arrests and casualties.

Myanmar's military government has largely ignored a plan by ASEAN heads of state that includes an immediate end to the violence, prompting the bloc to take an unprecedented step and bar Myanmar’s military leaders from its top-level gatherings, including the foreign ministerial meetings.

The generals responded by accusing the ASEAN of violating the bloc’s bedrock principles of non-intervention in each other’s domestic affairs.

“The situation in Myanmar is worrying,” Philippine Foreign Secretary Enrique Manalo told reporters Tuesday.

AP

Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi applauds during the opening of the Meeting of the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Commission at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Foreign Minister's Meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia, Tuesday, July 11,

ASIAN BRIEFS

China sends large group of warplanes, navy ships towards Taiwan

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—China sent navy ships and a large group of warplanes, including fighter jets and bombers, toward Taiwan over two days, the island’s defense ministry said on Wednesday, before its annual military exercises aimed at defending itself against a possible invasion. The Chinese People's Liberation Army sent 38 warplanes and 9 navy vessels around Taiwan, between 6 a.m. Tuesday to 6 a.m. Wednesday. From Wednesday morning until noon time, the military flew another 30 planes, among which included J-10 and J-16 fighters. Of these, 32 crossed the midline of the Taiwan Strait, an unofficial boundary that had been considered a buffer between the island and mainland. Later on Wednesday, another 23 planes crossed the midline. Taiwan is scheduled to hold the annual Han Guang exercise later this month, in which its military will hold combat readiness drills against preventing an invasion. It will also conduct the annual Wan'an exercises aimed at preparing civilians for natural disasters and practicing evacuations in case of an air raid. China claims self-ruled Taiwan as its own territory and in recent years has shown is displeasure at political activities in Taiwan by stepping up the number of military planes sent toward Taiwan. In the past year, it has also started sending its navy vessels, as well as drones to circle the waters near the island. In Tuesday and Wednesday's maneuvers, the PLA flew H-6 bombers in a large loop to the south of Taiwan, traveling past the island before looping back towards China's southern coast.

N. Korea fires first ICBM in 3 months after making threat over alleged US spy flights

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea test-fired its first intercontinental ballistic missile in three months on Wednesday, days after it threatened “shocking” consequences to protest what it called provocative United States reconnaissance activity near its territory. Some experts say North Korea likely launched its developmental, road-mobile Hwasong-18 ICBM, a type of solid-fuel weapon that is harder to detect and intercept than its liquid-fuel ICBMs. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un previously called the Hwasong-18 the most powerful weapon of his nuclear forces. The missile, fired from North Korea’s capital region around 10 a.m., flew about 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) at a maximum altitude of 6,000 kilometers (3,730 miles) before landing in waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan, according to South Korean and Japanese assessments. They said the missile was launched at a high angle in what observers say was an apparent attempt to avoid neighboring countries. Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno said the missile flew for 74 minutes—the longest flight time recorded by any weapon launched by North Korea. The previous record of 71 minutes was registered during the test flight of the liquid-fuel Hwasong-17 ICBM last year. South Korea’s military called the launch “a grave provocation” and urged North Korea to refrain from additional launches. Matsuno denounced North Korea’s repeated missile launches as “threats to the peace and safety of Japan, the region and international society.”

New weed laws draw tourists to Thailand from across Asia

BANGKOK (AP) —A Japanese tourist reaches into a baggie of cannabis he’s just bought in a central Bangkok weed shop, pulling out a gram of buds to chop down in a small black grinder, before rolling them neatly into a joint.

Only the slight spillage onto the smoking lounge’s table—and his cough as he lights up and inhales deeply—betray the fact that until two weeks ago, he’d never tried marijuana.

Most Asian nations have strict drug laws with harsh penalties, and Thailand’s de facto legalization of marijuana last year has brought a wave of tourists from the region like the visitor from Japan, intrigued by the lure of the forbidden leaf.

“I was curious about how I would feel after smoking,” said the 42-year-old tourist who spoke on condition that his name not be used, for fear his experimentation in Bangkok could lead to legal issues at home.

“I wonder why Japan bans it?" he pondered. "I wanted to try it.”

Even as more countries around the world legalize marijuana, Thailand has been the outlier in Asia, where several countries still have the death penalty for some cannabis offenses. Singapore has already executed two people this year for trafficking marijuana and its Central Narcotics Bureau has announced plans to randomly test people returning from Thailand.

Japan does not have the death penalty for drug offenses, but has warned that its laws on cannabis use may apply to its nationals even when they are abroad.

China has been more explicit, with its embassy in Thailand warning that if Chinese tourists consume marijuana abroad and are “detected upon returning to China, it is considered equivalent to using drugs domestically. As a result, you will be subject to corresponding legal penalties.” It issues similar warnings for travel to other countries where marijuana is readily available, such as the United States, Canada and the Netherlands.

On a recent flight from the Chinese city of Shanghai, passengers were cautioned not to “accidentally” try marijuana in Bangkok, with an announcement that in Thailand “some food and drink can include cannabis, so please pay attention to the leaf logo on the package of food.”

Neither Chinese nor Singaporean authorities would detail how frequently they tests citizens returning from countries where marijuana has been decriminalized, responding to queries from the AP simply by reiterating their previously-announced policies.

It's no wonder that weed dispensaries in Bangkok say that customers from Singapore and China are among the most cautious, asking questions about how long traces of the drug remain in the system and whether there are detox products.

But many remain undeterred, and Thailand's cannabis industry has grown at lightning speed, with weed dispensaries now almost as common as the ubiquitous convenience stores in some parts of the capital. Through February, nearly 6,000 licenses for cannabis-related businesses have been approved, including more than 1,600 in Bangkok alone, according to official figures.

World

Russia says Wagner mercenaries surrendering weapons

MOSCOW (AP)—Mercenaries of the Wagner Group are completing the handover of their weapons to the Russian military, the Defense Ministry said Wednesday, a move that follows the private army's brief rebellion last month that challenged the Kremlin's authority.

The disarming of Wagner reflects efforts by authorities to defuse the threat it posed and also appears to herald an end to the mercenary group's operations on the battlefield in Ukraine.

The actions come amid continued uncertainty about the fate of Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin and the terms of a deal that ended the armed rebellion by offering amnesty for him and his mercenaries along with permission to move to Belarus.

Among the weapons turned over were more than 2,000 pieces of equipment, such as tanks, rocket launchers, heavy artillery and air defense systems, along with over 2,500 metric tons of munitions and more than 20,000 firearms, the Defense Ministry said.

The statement follows the Kremlin's acknowledgment Monday that Prigozhin and 34 of his top officers met with President Vladimir Putin on June 29, five days after the rebellion. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Wagner's commanders pledged loyalty to Putin and that they were ready "to continue to fight for the Motherland."

Putin has said that Wagner troops had to choose whether to sign contracts with the Defense Ministry, move to Belarus or retire from service.

The Kremlin's confirmation that Putin met with Prigozhin, who led troops on a march to Moscow to demand the ouster of the country's top military leaders, raised new questions about the deal that ended the rebellion.

Putin denounced the revolt as an act of treason when it started and vowed harsh punishment for those who participated in it, but the criminal case against Prigozhin was dropped hours later as part of the deal. At the same time, the Wagner chief apparently could still face prosecution for financial wrongdoing or other charges.

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, who brokered the deal that ended the mutiny, said last week that his country offered Wagner field camps but noted that Prigozhin was in Russia and that his troops remained at their home camps. Lukashenko noted that their deployment to Belarus would depend on decisions by Prigozhin and the Russian government.

During the revolt that lasted less than 24 hours, Prigozhin's mercenaries quickly swept through the southern Russian city of Rostov-on-Don and captured the military headquarters there without firing a shot before driving to within about 200 kilometers (125 miles) of Moscow. Prigozhin described it as a "march of justice" to oust the military leaders, who demanded that Wagner sign contracts with the Defense Ministry by July 1.

The mutiny faced little resistance and fighters downed at least six military helicopters and a command post aircraft, killing at least 10 airmen. When the deal was struck, Prigozhin ordered his troops to return to their camps.

The rebellion represented the biggest threat to Putin in his more than two decades in power and badly dented his authority, even though Prigozhin claimed the uprising was not aimed at the president but intended to force the ouster of Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and chief of the military's General Staff, Gen. Valery Gerasimov.

Both men have kept their jobs. Many observers suggested that even if Putin wasn't happy with their performance, Prigozhin's demand for their ouster helped secure their jobs, since firing them would be seen as a concession to the Wagner boss.

At the same time, uncertainty surrounds the fate of Gen. Sergei Surovikin, the deputy commander of the Russian group of forces fighting in Ukraine who reportedly had ties to Prigozhin.

Surovikin hasn't been seen since the rebellion began, when he posted a video urging an end to it, and two people in Washington familiar with the matter who spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to discuss it publicly told The Associated Press in June that he has been detained. Several Russian military bloggers also said he has been detained and questioned.

Andrei Kartapolov, a retired general who heads the defense affairs committee in the lower house of the Russian parliament, said Wednesday that Surovikin was "resting" and is "not currently available," but wouldn't elaborate.

AP

In this photo provided by the Florida Keys News Bureau, Joshua Mogle, right, of Altoona, Iowa, buries his face in a Key lime pie as he eats his way to victory at the World Famous Key Lime Pie Eating Championship Tuesday, July 4, 2023, in Key West, Fla.

Ukraine wins G7 security pledges, but NATO membership elusive

VILNIUS, Lithuania (AP)—Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy welcomed fresh pledges of weapons and ammunition to fight Russia's invasion along with longer-term security commitments from the West on Wednesday even as he expressed disappointment over the lack of a clear path for his country to join NATO as the alliance wrapped up its annual summit.

"The Ukrainian delegation is bringing home a significant security victory for the Ukraine, for our country, for our people, for our children," he said while flanked by U.S. President Joe Biden and other leaders from the Group of Seven most powerful democratic nations.

A joint declaration issued by the G7 lays the groundwork for each nation to negotiate agreements to help Ukraine bolster its military over the long term. Zelenskyy described the initiative as a bridge toward eventual NATO membership and a deterrent against Russia.

"We will not waver," Biden vowed after the summit in Lithuania ended. "I mean that. Our commitment to Ukraine will not weaken. We will stand for freedom today, tomorrow and for as long as it takes."

The Ukrainian and American presidents also met privately along with their advisers, and Biden acknowledged that Zelenskyy is sometimes "frustrated" by the pace of military assistance.

Zelenskyy thanked Biden, saying that "you spend this money for our lives," and said shipments of controversial cluster munitions would help Ukraine's fight against Russia.

It was a marked shift in tone from Zelenskyy's complaints a day earlier, when he said it was "unprecedented and absurd" to avoid setting a timeline for Ukraine to join NATO.

Biden said Zelenskyy now understands that whether his country is formally in NATO is "not relevant as long as he has commitments" such as security guarantees. "So he's not concerned about that now."

On the final day of NATO's summit, the alliance launched a new forum for deepening ties with Ukraine: the NATO-Ukraine Council. It's intended to serve as a permanent body where the alliance's 31 members and Ukraine can hold consultations and call for meetings in emergency situations.

The setting is part of NATO's effort to bring Ukraine as close as possible to the military alliance without actually joining it. On Tuesday, the leaders said in their communique summarizing the summit's conclusions that Ukraine can join "when allies agree and conditions are met."

"Today we meet as equals," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said at a news conference with Zelenskyy. "I look forward to the day we meet as allies."

The ambiguous plan for Ukraine's future membership reflects the challenges of reaching consensus among the alliance's current members while the war continues.

"The results of the summit are good, but if there were an invitation, that would be ideal," Zelenskyy said, through a translator. He added that joining NATO would be "a serious motivating factor for Ukrainian society" as it resists Russia.

"NATO needs us just as we need NATO," he said alongside Stoltenberg.

Ukraine's future membership was the most divisive and emotionally charged issue at this year's summit. In essence, Western countries are willing to keep sending weapons to help Ukraine do the job that NATO was designed to do — hold the line against a Russian invasion — but not allow Ukraine to join its ranks and benefit from its security during the war.

"We have to stay outside of this war but be able to support Ukraine. We managed that very delicate balancing act for the last 17 months. It's to the benefit of everyone that we maintain that balancing act," Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo said.

Symbols of support for Ukraine are common around Vilnius, where the country's blue-and-yellow flags hang from buildings and are pasted inside windows. One sign cursed Russian President Vladimir Putin. Another urged NATO leaders to "hurry up" their assistance for Ukraine.

Blast in Lebanon-Israel border wounds 3 members of Hezbollah

BEIRUT (AP)—An explosion near Lebanon's border with Israel slightly wounded at least three members of the militant Hezbollah group, a Lebanese security official said, raising tensions in the area.

The three Hezbollah members were taken to a hospital near the scene of the explosion in the village of Bustan in the southern Lebanese province of Tyre, the official said on condition of anonymity in line with regulations.

The Israeli army said in a statement that several suspects approached a security fence and attempted to sabotage it, drawing efforts by soldiers to force them to retreat. It posted surveillance footage showing four people in civilian clothing approaching the border fence, and running away after an explosion. The identity of the suspects is unknown, it said.

The Israeli army later told The Associated Press that soldiers had used a stun grenade.

The incident took place hours before Hezbollah Secretary-General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah gave a speech to commemorate the start of a monthlong war between Israel and the militant group in 2006 that ended with a draw.

Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said the army had used "nonlethal means" to deter people he called activists. "Anyone who tries us will get an answer," Gallant said. "We have a lot to do, and we will know how to do what is needed at the right time."

U.N. peacekeeping forces along the southern Lebanese border, known as UNIFIL, said they were investigating the situation. "In the meantime, the situation is extremely severe," UNIFIL said. "We urge everyone to cease any action that may lead to escalation of any kind."

Soon after, the Israeli military said it fired warning shots at a distance near another border town after a group of people hurled rocks and firecrackers near the border barrier near the Lebanese village of Kfar Kila.

Nasrallah in his address briefly mentioned the incidents, saying that they are "under investigation" and that the group will later take the "necessary actions," without going into details.

Off The Wall

Panda gives birth to twins at a S. Korean theme park

AP
This photo provided by Samsung C&T Corp. shows giant panda Ai Bao and her twin cubs at an amusement park in Yongin, South Korea, Friday, July 7, 2023.

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—A giant panda has given birth to squirming, squealing healthy twin girls at a South Korean theme park.

Ai Bao gave birth to her cubs last Friday at the Everland theme park near Seoul, the park's operator said Tuesday.

It released video of the birth and the mother caring for her newborns, as well as veterinarians examining the tiny cubs.

They are the first panda twins born in South Korea, Samsung C&T Resort Group said.

Both Ai Bao and her newborns are in good health, the resort group said in the statement.

Decades of conservation efforts in the wild and study in captivity saved the panda species native to China from extinction, increasing its population from fewer than 1,000 at one time to more than 1,800 in the wild and captivity. The life expectancy of a giant panda in the wild is about 15 years, but in captivity they have lived to be as old as 38.

The South Korean resort group said it will observe the cubs' health and growth to determine when to unveil them to the public. Meanwhile, the group said it will use social media to show off the cubs.

Ai Bao and a male panda, Le Bao, came to the park in 2016 from China on a 15-year lease. In 2020, Ai Bao gave birth to a female cub named Fu Bao.

Ai Bao, Le Bao and Fu Bao had been the only pandas in South Korea. Everland's Panda World, which houses the three pandas, has received 14 million visitors, according to the resort group.

Extremely overdue book returned to Massachusetts library 119 years later

BOSTON (AP)—On Feb. 14, 1904, someone curious about the emerging possibilities of a key force of nature checked out James Clerk Maxwell's "An Elementary Treatise on Electricity" from the New Bedford Free Public Library.

It would take 119 years and the sharp eyes of a librarian in West Virginia before the scientific text finally found its way back to the Massachusetts library.

The discovery occurred when Stewart Plein, the curator of rare books at West Virginia University Libraries, was sorting through a recent donation of books.

Plein found the treatise and noticed it had been part of the collection at the New Bedford library and, critically, had not been stamped "Withdrawn," indicating that while extremely overdue, the book had not been discarded.

Plein contacted Jodi Goodman, the special collections librarian in New Bedford, to alert her to the find.

"This came back in extremely good condition," New Bedford Public Library Director Olivia Melo said Friday. "Someone obviously kept this on a nice bookshelf because it was in such good shape and probably got passed down in the family."

The treatise was first published in 1881, two years after Maxwell's death in 1879, although the cranberry-colored copy now back at the New Bedford library is not considered a rare edition of the work, Melo said.

The library occasionally receives books as much as 10 or 15 years overdue, but nothing anywhere close to a century or more, she said.

The treatise was published at a time when the world was still growing to understand the possibilities of electricity. In 1880, Thomas Edison received a historic patent embodying the principles of his incandescent lamp.

When the book was last in New Bedford, the nation was preparing for its second modern World Series, incumbent Republican President Theodore Roosevelt was on track to win another term, Wilbur and Orville Wright had conducted their first airplane flight just a year before and New York City was celebrating its first subway line.

Collection of 70K pencils may be possible world record

COLFAX, Iowa (AP)—An Iowa man may be well on his way to an official world record—for pencils.

Aaron Bartholmey of Colfax has been collecting wooden advertising pencils since he was a child. Now, he claims to own more than 70,000. That's substantially more than the Guinness World Record for the largest pencil collection—24,000, held by Emilio Arenas from Uruguay since 2020.

Bartholmey told KCCI-TV that his most treasured pencils are those from his hometown, noting that in many instances the pencils "are the only place where there is any record of that business still, and I think it's just a neat way to preserve history."

Last weekend, two counters from the American Pencil Collectors Society were at the Colfax Historical Society to count Bartholmey's pencils. Now, he's waiting to hear if the count is approved by Guinness, which estimated the review process could take up to three months.

Science & Technology

Webb spots most distant black hole yet. More may be lurking

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP)—Astronomers have discovered the most distant black hole yet using the Webb Space Telescope, but that record isn't expected to last.

The black hole is at the center of a galaxy dating to within a mere 570 million years of the Big Bang. That's 100 million years closer to the beginning of the cosmos than a black hole identified in 2021 by a Chinese team using a telescope in Chile.

Webb already has spotted other black holes that appear to be even closer to the Big Bang nearly 14 billion years ago, but those findings are still under review, said University of Texas at Austin astronomer Steven Finkelstein, one of the lead researchers. The finding has been accepted for publication by the Astrophysical Journal Letters.

Because the signals from this particular black hole are weak, more observations are needed, according to the Texas-led team.

There are untold numbers of dormant black holes, some even more distant than this one. But without any glowing gas, they are invisible, Finkelstein said.

Detected in February, this particular one is active and actually puny as black holes go—equivalent to about 9 million times the mass of our sun. That's close in size to the one in our own Milky Way galaxy, according to the team.

Using Webb, the team also spotted two other small black holes from the early universe, dating to around 1 billion years after the Big Bang. The observations suggest that these downsized versions may have been more common as the cosmos took shape than previously thought.

"There are probably many more hidden little monsters out there waiting to be found," Colby College's Dale Kocevski, who was part of the team, said in an email.

Launched in late 2021, Webb is the largest, most powerful telescope ever sent into space. Its first images and science results were released by NASA with much fanfare a year ago this week.

Pendants made from giant sloths suggest an earlier arrival of people in the Americas

By CHRISTINA LARSON
AP SCIENCE WRITER

WASHINGTON (AP)—Theodore "Ted" Kaczynski, the Harvard-educated mathematician who retreated to a dingy shack in the Montana wilderness and ran a 17-year bombing campaign that killed three people and injured 23 others, died Saturday. He was 81.

Branded the "Unabomber" by the FBI, Kaczynski died at the federal prison medical center in Butner, North Carolina, Kristie Breshears, a spokesperson for the federal Bureau of Prisons, told The Associated Press. He was found unresponsive in his cell early Saturday morning and was pronounced dead around 8 a.m., she said. A cause of death was not immediately known.

Before his transfer to the prison medical facility, he had been held in the federal Supermax prison in Florence, Colorado, since May 1998, when he was sentenced to four life sentences plus 30 years for a campaign of terror that set universities nationwide on edge. He admitted committing 16 bombings from 1978 and 1995, permanently maiming several of his victims.

Years before the Sept. 11 attacks and the anthrax mailing, the Unabomber's deadly homemade bombs changed the way Americans mailed packages and boarded airplanes, even virtually shutting down air travel on the West Coast in July 1995.

He forced The Washington Post, in conjunction with The New York Times, to make the agonizing decision in September 1995 to publish his 35,000-word manifesto, "Industrial Society and Its Future," which claimed modern society and technology was leading to a sense of powerlessness and alienation.

But it led to his undoing. Kaczynski's brother, David, and David's wife, Linda Patrik, recognized the treatise's tone and tipped off the FBI, which had been searching for the Unabomber for years in nation's longest, costliest manhunt.

Human impact began new epoch in 1950s

By SETH BORENSTEIN
AP SCIENCE WRITER

From climate change to species loss and pollution, humans have etched their impact on Earth with such strength and permanence since the middle of the 20th century that a special team of scientists says a new geologic epoch began then.

Called the Anthropocene—and derived from the Greek terms for "human" and "new"—this epoch started sometime between 1950 and 1954, according to the scientists. While there is evidence worldwide that captures the impact of burning fossil fuels, detonating nuclear weapons and dumping fertilizers and plastics on land and in waterways, the scientists are proposing a small but deep lake outside of Toronto, Canada—Crawford Lake—to place a historic marker.

"It's quite clear that the scale of change has intensified unbelievably and that has to be human impact," said University of Leicester geologist Colin Waters, who chaired the Anthropocene Working Group.

This puts the power of humans in a somewhat similar class with the meteorite that crashed into Earth 66 million years ago, killing off dinosaurs and starting the Cenozoic Era, or what is conversationally known as the age of mammals. But not quite. While that meteorite started a whole new era, the working group is proposing that humans only started a new epoch, which is a much smaller geologic time period.

The group aims to determine a specific start date of the Anthropocene by measuring plutonium levels at the bottom of Crawford Lake.

The idea of the Anthropocene was proposed at a science conference more than 20 years ago by the late Nobel Prize-winning chemist Paul Crutzen. Teams of scientists have debated the issue since then and finally set up the working group to study whether it was needed and, if so, when the epoch would start and where it would be commemorated.

Life & Style

‘Succession’ leads Emmy noms; HBO nabs top 3 spots

LOS ANGELES (AP)—HBO dominated Wednesday morning’s Emmy nominations, with the elite trio of “ Succession,” “The White Lotus” and “The Last of Us” combining for a whopping 74, but the dominant theme darkening the scene is the ongoing writers strike and the looming possibility that actors may join them in as little as a day.

“Succession” and its deeply dysfunctional dynasty of one-percenters led all Emmy nominees in its fourth and final season with 27, including best drama, which it has won two of the past three years. It got three nominations for best actor in a drama, with Brian Cox, Jeremy Strong and Kieran Culkin all getting nods for playing men of the Roy clan, and Sarah Snook getting a best actress nomination. It also got four nominations for best supporting actor in a drama.

The cursed vacationers at a Sicilian resort from the second season of “The White Lotus” truly dominated the supporting categories, however, landing five nominations for best supporting actress in a drama—including nods for Jennifer Coolidge and Aubrey Plaza—and four more for best supporting actor.

Bella Ramsey and Pedro Pascal, the duo on a fungus-filled quest in “ The Last of Us,” each got lead acting nominations. The show, based on a popular Playstation video game, was second behind “Succession” with 24 nominations. “The White Lotus” had 23.

“ Ted Lasso “ was tops among comedies with 21 nominations, including best comedy series and best actor for Jason Sudeikis. The Apple TV+ series won both awards for each of its first two seasons, but its threepeat prospects depend on whether Emmy voters favor other contenders like “The Bear” or “Marvelous Mrs. Maisel.”

HBO VIA AP

This image released by HBO shows Pedro Pascal, left, and Bella Ramsey in a scene from the series “The Last of Us.”

The nominations suggested that HBO—which got the most overall nominations by far with 127—can still dominate even as streaming-only outlets have taken over so much of elite TV. The distinction is increasingly blurred, however, with a huge segment of viewers watching “Succession” and the cable channel’s other offerings on the streaming service now known as Max.

Cox, 77, got his best actor in a drama nod despite appearing in fewer than half of this season’s “Succession” episodes, though as the Roy family patriarch he loomed just as large over the episodes he didn’t appear in. A win would be his first for the role, though he won an Emmy for best supporting actor in a TV movie in 2001.

Strong won in 2020 for playing “eldest boy” Kendall Roy. Culkin got his first nomination for best actor after two previous nominations in the supporting category.

Actors joining movie and television writers on strike would further shut down the industry and be the first time since 1960 that two Hollywood unions were simultaneously striking. While show and film releases will continue, work on upcoming projects will cease—as would actors’ interviews and appearances to promote the projects.

The possibility of an industry debilitated by strikes could dampen any joy for the new nominees, and could put the damper on the ceremony scheduled for Sept. 18 on the Fox network.

Sheryl Lee Ralph, who provided the emotional high point of last year’s ceremony with her half-sung victory speech for her best supporting actor Emmy in “Abbott Elementary,” said she is a “puddle of emotions” after getting nominated again amid the strife.

“Change is hard. Change is difficult. And in the midst of once again of a great moment in my life, I am surrounded by a difficult moment,” Ralph told The Associated Press. “This is a fight for artistry, this is not a fight to make people rich.”

The nominations were announced by “Community” star Yvette Nicole Brown and Television Academy CEO Frank Scherma, who referenced the labor disputes before at the top of Wednesday’s livestream.

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Vandals in Naples destroy artwork by Italian artist Michelangelo Pistoletto

MILAN (AP)—Vandals set fire and destroyed a seminal artwork by one of Italy’s most famous living artists early Wednesday outside Naples’ City Hall. By the time flames were doused, all that was left of the installation by Michelangelo Pistoletto was a charred frame. Pistoletto’s artwork, titled “Venus of the Rags” had been display in Naples since June 28. It featured a large plaster neoclassical nude Venus, inspired by Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen’s 19th century “Venus with Apple,” picking through a mountain of rags. Pistoletto made several versions of “Venus of the Rags.”

Prosecutors rest sexual assault case against Kevin Spacey in London court

LONDON (AP)—Prosecutors rested their sexual assault case against Kevin Spacey in a London courtroom Wednesday after four men testified in the past two weeks that the Oscar winner preyed on them. Prosecutors read jurors statements Spacey gave investigators denying that he aggressively grabbed three men by the crotch and performed a nonconsensual sex act on a fourth. The defense is scheduled to begin presenting its case Thursday in Southwark Crown Court. The stakes are high, with Spacey facing a possible prison term if convicted. The 63-year-old American actor has pleaded not guilty to 12 charges that include sexual and indecent assault counts and one count of causing a person to engage in penetrative sexual activity without consent. The allegations date from 2001 to 2013 when Spacey was working at the Old Vic Theatre.

Milan Kundera dies in Paris at 94

PARIS (AP)—Milan Kundera, the renowned but reclusive author whose dissident writings transformed him into an exiled satirist of totalitarianism and explorer of identity and the human condition, has died in Paris. He was 94. Kundera died Tuesday afternoon, his longstanding publishing house Gallimard said in a one-sentence statement on Wednesday. It confirmed that he died in Paris, where he has lived for decades, but provided no further information. The European Parliament held a moment of silence upon news of his passing. Kundera held both French and Czech nationality, which he lost and then regained.

In-law appoints herself master of all ceremonies

DEAR ABBY: I have a sister-in-law, “Helen,” who has appointed herself as the final word on all family events. No other relative has any input into when, where, what, etc., regarding any family celebration. If it’s not her way, it’s the highway.

The biggest problem with Helen is she schedules everything on the date that fits her calendar without regard for anyone else’s. An example: We once celebrated Christmas in February because that worked best for her. Another time, my wife and I scheduled a complicated vacation around my brother’s birthday so we could be there to celebrate with him. Helen moved his birthday party right into the middle of our prepaid vacation.

More examples: Thanksgiving is celebrated in early December, and other significant dates fall whenever she decides and are subject to change at the last moment at her whim. Complying with Helen’s one-sided demands makes planning for everyone else a nightmare.

The control doesn’t end there. It also includes the venue, menu and guest list. She even puts place cards on the table designating the seating arrangements. As with everything else, these are NOT negotiable. If not complied with, the “offender” is subjected to a minimum of six months of silent treatment and ghosting. How does one deal with this?

CONTROLLED IN FLORIDA

DEAR CONTROLLED: One deals with this by discussing it with other family members to see if they feel the same as you do and are willing to face the consequences of Helen’s extended silences, which, from my perspective, might be a relief. (Then pray she doesn’t plan your funeral.)

■■■

DEAR ABBY: I’m a nurse who still works full time. Most of my peers are retired. Several of them I’ve started to avoid at all costs. Each time I talk to them, all they want to talk about are their aches and pains, how sick they are and how mad they are at their kids, siblings or spouse. They aren’t just annoyed. They’re furious about any real or perceived slight.

I have thought about introducing them all to each other so they could have a group pity party. I have suggested consulting their doctors or trying psychotherapy. I’m just tired of it. I can’t stand the negativity or their hypochondria. I feel guilty, but I now dread any phone call, text or invitation to get together. Please help. I don’t want to hurt anyone, but I’m worn out.

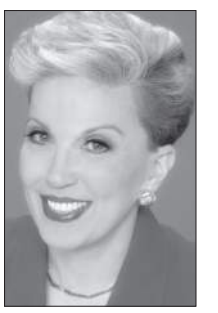
POSITIVE PERSON IN THE SOUTH

DEAR POSITIVE PERSON: There comes a time, usually around the age of 50, when some folks begin pruning their friend list. Bluntly put, this means weeding out sources of constant negativity. Because your former peers drag you down with their family dysfunction and “organ recitals,” when they try to make contact, remind them that while they are retired and have free time, you still work and are strapped for it -- which is why you can’t be involved as often as they want you to be. Being unavailable isn’t rude. Sometimes, it’s self-defense.

■■■

To receive a collection of Abby’s most memorable—and most frequently requested—poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY
BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

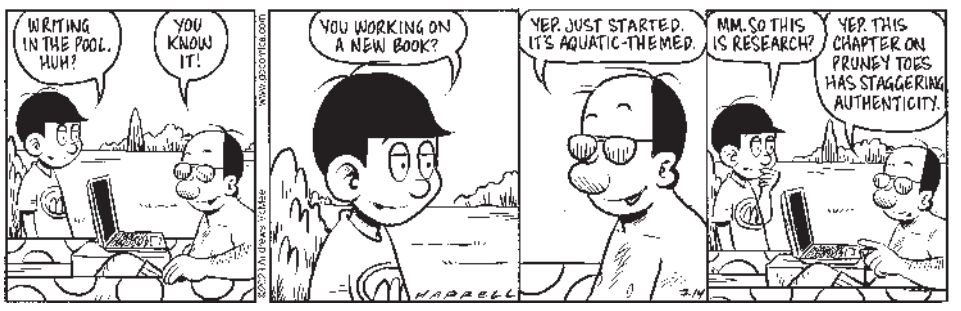
I SAW YOUR TEACHER, MISS WORMWOOD, IN THE SUPERMARKET TODAY. SHE SAID TO SAY HI.
YOU SAW MISS WORMWOOD?? SHE SHOPS AT THE SUPERMARKET??
WELL CERTAINLY. WHAT DID YOU THINK?
I DUNNO... I KINDA FIGURED TEACHERS SLEPT IN COFFINS ALL SUMMER.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


WRITING IN THE POOL. HUH?
YOU KNOW IT!
YOU WORKING ON A NEW BOOK?
YEP. JUST STARTED. IT'S AQUATIC-THEMED.
MM. SO THIS IS RESEARCH?
YEP. THIS CHAPTER ON PRUNEY TOES HAS STAGGERING AUTHENTICITY.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

HERE'S YOUR TICKET. YOU MUST APPEAR IN COURT IN 3 MONTHS.
3 MONTHS?! CAN'T I GET THIS OVER WITH SOONER?
LET ME ADD A BANK ROBBERY CHARGE AND THEY'LL SEE YOU NEXT MONDAY.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

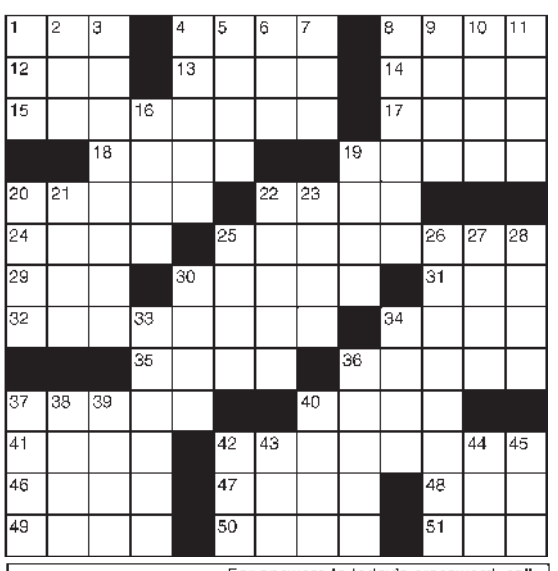
ACROSS
1 Scribble (down)
4 Grand tale
8 Wild guess
12 Oklahoma city
13 Crumbly earth
14 Sit for a photo
15 "Right-o!"
17 Evict
18 TV alien
19 Heart line?
20 Riyadh residents
22 Pre-weekend yell
24 Camera part
25 Elton John hit single
29 Chou En- —
30 Sitar tunes
31 Former Mideast gp.
32 Peruvian artist with a multi-octave range
34 To be, in Paris
35 Dick Tracy's love
36 "Pride and Prejudice" suitor
37 Implore
40 Kismet
41 Tragic king
42 "Get rid of stuff" event
46 Brewer's kiln
47 Second-hand
48 Ripken of baseball
49 Reasons
50 "Roar" singer Perry
51 "Let me think ..."

DOWN
1 Blue bird
2 Poem of praise
3 Australian state
4 Dubai dignitaries
5 Picnic spot
6 Rage
7 Browns, on scoreboards
8 Parodies
9 See the sights
10 CEO's aide
11 Alpha follower
16 Weeps
19 Broadcasts
20 Friend
21 500 sheets
22 Roman robes
23 Avocado dip, for short
25 Orange veggies
26 Community program
27 DEA agent
28 Joel of "Cabaret"
30 Regretted
33 Kicks off
34 Takes courses?
36 Papa
37 Oxen's burden
38 Wife of Jacob
39 Relaxed
40 Worry
42 Guffaw
43 Solid-rock insert
44 Felon's flight
45 Stately tree

Solution time: 25 mins.

W	E	D	S	■	D	O	T	■	C	P	A	S
L	H	I	C	■	W	A	H	■	A	O	N	L
I	I	V	O	■	L	I	L	■	L	P	G	A
S	F	A	N	C	F	■	I	I	F	U	■	■
■	■	■	C	O	B	A	I	T	B	I	U	F
A	S	S	E	T	■	D	I	S	■	A	R	A
T	O	N	S	■	E	L	S	■	S	C	A	R
O	H	O	■	M	A	I	■	S	P	E	L	L
P	O	W	D	E	R	B	L	U	E	■	■	■
■	■	■	B	U	L	G	■	A	R	A	G	O	N
I	R	L	L	■	U	L	I	■	K	L	N	O
D	O	I	I	■	D	S	T	■	U	N	T	O
R	O	T	S	■	S	U	F	■	P	F	O	N

Yesterday's answer 7-14



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Alisha Wainwright, 34; Scott Porter, 44; Matthew Fox, 57; Jane Lynch, 63.

Happy Birthday: Remember what's important to you this year. Letting outside influences infiltrate your world will set you back. Wanting to help others is admirable but not in your best interest. Put your needs first, and you'll be in a better frame of mind when helping others. Change begins with you. A steady pace will take you where you want to go. Your numbers are 6, 13, 22, 29, 32, 37, 40.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Social events will lead to an introduction you won't want to miss. The connections you make will give you hope for a better future. Don't hesitate to offer your services to someone you'd like to work alongside. Romance is in the stars. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Be a good listener, and you'll be privy to information that can help you bypass someone who gives you a hard time. Be willing to put your energy where it counts instead of counting on someone else to do things for you. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Give your all, but don't trust others to do the same. Take responsibility and do it yourself, and you won't be disappointed. Back away from anyone trying to manipulate how you do things. Say what's on your mind and move forward. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Being methodical will help you gain leverage. Pay attention to detail, be diligent and present your offer with strength and courage. The influence you have on others must come from the goodness of your heart. 3 stars

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Simplify your life. Sidestep controversial situations. Overreacting and hasty decisions will hold you back. Use your intelligence and experience to navigate your way forward. Progress depends on you and what you are willing to contribute. Offer peace and love, and avoid discord. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Pressure will mount if you don't have a plan. A positive attitude will help you manage the possibilities and encourage forward motion. Don't share your intentions with anyone who is emotionally unstable. Have a plan and work alone. ✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Listen, evaluate and hone your skills to fit your subsequent pursuit. Give others space, and you will buy yourself time and opportunity to flesh out what's important to you. Control your spending, and avoid getting involved in joint ventures. Avoid unnecessary change. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Question everything and figure out how to move forward using the information you receive. You can create opportunities if you are innovative and willing to put your reputation on the line. Believing in yourself is important. ✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Open your eyes when dealing with manipulative people. An emotional incident will leave you at odds about what to do next. Respond to what others want, and protect yourself from hidden costs and poor investments. ✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* The early bird catches the worm. You'll be ready to take on the competition if you keep up with what's trending. A moneymaking opportunity will help you lower debt. Don't fear making a change or taking the road less traveled. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Don't believe everything you hear. A change someone makes will be a sign of their intentions. Stick close to home and nurture meaningful relationships. An affectionate gesture will enhance your love life and encourage unification. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Retreat from anyone causing emotional uncertainty. Give yourself a chance to look at every angle of a situation before agreeing to something that has underlying implications that don't fit your agenda. A creative outlet will ease stress and give you time to think. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are expressive, generous and passionate. You are resourceful and creative.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

8		3	5				6	
			1					
		6		9			5	
		1		4			3	
			8	5		1		6
7						8		4
			4					
		5		3				8
	7		9		2		4	

Difficulty: ★★★★ 7/14

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

3	2	4	7	9	1	5	6	8
7	9	6	8	4	5	1	3	2
8	1	5	3	2	6	4	7	9
1	6	8	5	7	4	2	9	3
4	3	2	6	8	9	7	5	1
5	7	9	2	1	3	6	8	4
2	5	3	1	6	8	9	4	7
9	8	7	4	5	2	3	1	6
6	4	1	9	3	7	8	2	5

Difficulty: ★★★ 7/13

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

TAMARIND CHUTNEY — Solution: 8 letters

R	R	D	A	E	R	P	S	(H)	S	P	A	P	D	I
M	E	E	D	E	D	E	(E)	S	E	D	C	E	E	T
Y	I	D	D	N	A	(A)	T	D	T	H	I	C	K	S
R	G	X	U	N	(T)	L	E	A	A	I	D	U	C	I
E	A	O	T	C	A	L	A	A	W	R	I	A	A	S
G	R	E	T	U	T	I	T	S	B	U	S	S	P	N
G	A	C	C	T	R	I	R	F	A	P	S	P	R	O
A	M	B	O	I	L	E	O	O	I	M	O	I	A	C
J	E	B	C	N	M	O	S	N	C	E	L	C	I	H
S	P	O	O	N	D	L	D	P	O	L	V	E	S	I
I	E	I	N	A	P	I	I	A	O	O	E	A	I	L
M	D	S	U	G	A	R	M	N	K	N	M	B	N	I
M	L	A	T	N	C	A	Y	E	N	N	E	H	S	E
E	S	L	F	R	E	E	Z	E	N	S	I	E	V	E
R	H	T	N	U	A	S	S	R	E	T	U	L	I	D

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Bhel, Boil, Bottled, Cayenne, Chaat, Chili, Coconut, Condiment, Consist, Cook, Coriander, Deseeded, Dilute, Dissolve, Food, Freeze, Garam, Ground, Heat, Imli, Indian, Jaggery, Masala, Mash, Melon, Mixtures, Packed, Paneer, Pani, Papdi, Puri, Raisins, Reduction, Salt, Sauce, Saunth, Sieve, Simmer, Spice, Spoon, Spread, Substitute, Sugar, Thick, Water

Yesterday's Answer: Rolling

The NEW **TELEWORD VINTAGE COLLECTION EDITION #1** can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

NL snaps All-Star Game losing streak, tops AL 3-2 behind Elias Díaz homer

SEATTLE (AP)—Shining brightly in the Emerald City, the National League snapped a losing streak that lasted more than a decade.

An unheralded catcher from Colorado delivered the big blow.

Elias Díaz hit a two-run homer off Félix Bautista in the eighth inning, and the NL snapped a nine-game losing streak in the All-Star Game with a 3-2 win over the American League on Tuesday night.

The NL won for the first time since an 8-0 victory in 2012 in Kansas City, and Díaz became the first Rockies player to win the All-Star MVP award.

"It feels incredible. When we all got here, we all talked about how we were going to bring home the win," said Díaz, who was non-tendered by the Pirates at the end of 2019. "I just didn't realize it was going to be me to bring home the win."

Díaz drove a 2-2 pitch from Baltimore's hard-throwing closer deep to left to put the NL in front. Díaz was the lone representative for Colorado in his first All-Star Game appearance.

"It does matter. We wanted to win, the American League we wanted to win," Bautista said through an interpreter. "But overall I think that it's an experience I'll never forget and just wish that would have been a little bit different."

Díaz has nine homers this season, but hadn't hit a long ball since June 23 against the Los Angeles Angels.

AP

National League's Elias Díaz, of the Colorado Rockies (35), celebrates his two run home run with Nick Castellanos (8), of the Philadelphia Phillies, in the eighth inning during the MLB All-Star baseball game in Seattle, Tuesday, July 11, 2023.

"As soon as he walked in the clubhouse and I met him, he said, 'I'll do anything you want. If I play, I play. If I don't, I don't. I'm just so happy to be here,'" NL manager Rob Thomson said. "So for him to do that, it's fantastic."

For most of the night, the All-Star Game was a pitchers' duel highlighted by a couple big hits and some excellent defense.

It got nervous for the NL with Philadelphia closer Craig Kimbrel on the mound in the ninth.

"I threw way more pitches than I wanted to on an off day," Kimbrel joked.

Wander Franco led off with a fly ball to the warning track, and Kimbrel issued two-out walks to Kyle Tucker and Seattle star Julio Rodríguez.

The 22-year-old Rodríguez was in position to close it out in front of his home crowd.

"I was definitely trying to win it. But it was a situation where I had to pass the baton," he said.

Kimbrel recovered to strike out José Ramírez to end it. Kimbrel also pitched in the previous NL win, recording two outs in 2012.

"The ninth inning in the dugout was just a lot of fun to experience," said San Diego's Josh Hader, who pitched the eighth for the NL.

Yandy Díaz hit a solo homer in the second and Bo Bichette's sacrifice fly in the sixth gave the AL a 2-1 lead.

J.D. Martinez doubled and scored on Luis Arraez's single in the fourth against Seattle's George Kirby, tying it at 1. Lourdes Gurriel Jr. appeared to tie the game again in the seventh when his shot down the left-field line was originally ruled a homer but was overturned as a foul ball on replay.

The All-Star Game returned to Seattle for the first time since 2001 when the Mariners were in the middle of their magical 116-win regular season, Cal Ripken Jr. said goodbye to the All-Star stage and Tommy Lasorda took a tumble.

Gerrit Cole became the first New York Yankees pitcher to start the All-Star Game since Roger Clemens in that 2001 game. He needed a pair of spectacular leaping catches from Adolis García and Randy Arozarena near the wall to escape the first inning unscathed.

Pitching was the story of the night. Only nine balls were hit over 100 mph. There were 20 combined strikeouts, including Camilo Doval silencing the home crowd with a strikeout of Rodríguez in the seventh inning when four of the five pitches topped 100 mph.

"You can tell, our guys, we wanted to win. They wanted to win," AL manager Dusty Baker said. "There was a lot of pride out there and a lot of competitiveness out there. You could tell by the energy on both sides and the energy in the ballpark."

OHTANI CHANT

The All-Star Game was missing some big names with Mike Trout and Aaron Judge out with injuries, but it still had Shohei Ohtani.

The Angels star drew the biggest cheers outside of Seattle's three representatives during introductions, and he was serenaded with chants of "Come to Seattle" when he was at the plate. The crowd apparently was well aware of his pending free agency this offseason.

INJURIES

Toronto reliever Jordan Romano left in the seventh after throwing the pitch that Gurriel hit foul and was originally ruled fair. He threw five pitches before leaving the game with tightness in his back.

Chicago White Sox slugger Luis Robert Jr. did not play after feeling tightness in his right calf during the Home Run Derby. The White Sox said Robert underwent an MRI in Seattle and is listed as day to day.

SIX PACK

The Rangers made All-Star history when Nathan Eovaldi took the mound in the second. That marked the third time in an All-Star Game when there were six players from the same team on the field at the same time. It also occurred with the 1939 Yankees and 1951 Dodgers.

The Baseball Hall of Fame said a ball signed by all six players in the game would be headed to Cooperstown.

"That's got to be one of the cooler moments in sports when you've got half the team on the field is your team, especially under these circumstances," catcher Jonah Heim said. "It's really special and I was glad I got to share it with these guys today."

SKIPPED OVER

The Tampa Bay duo of Shane McClanahan and Wander Franco were inadvertently skipped over during pregame introductions. The pair jogged in on their own and left it to the Rays' social media staff to give them a proper announcement.

MARINERS HONORED

Six of the eight members of Seattle's All-Star contingent from the 2001 game were recognized pregame. John Olerud, Bret Boone, Freddy Garcia, Jeff Nelson, Kazuhiro Sasaki, Edgar Martinez and manager Lou Piniella were honored. Ichiro Suzuki and Mike Cameron were also on the All-Star team that season.

Baseball Hall of Famers Martinez and Ken Griffey Jr. threw out the ceremonial first pitches to former teammates Dan Wilson and Jay Buhner.

Rockies' Díaz unlikely All-Star MVP, 3 1/2 years after cut loose by Pirates

SEATTLE (AP)—Elias Díaz may be the most unlikely All-Star MVP.

Just 3 1/2 years after Pittsburgh failed to offer a contract and allowed him to become a free agent, Diaz hit a go-ahead, two-run homer off Félix Bautista in the eighth inning to lift the National League over the American 3-2 on Tuesday night.

A first-time All-Star at age 32, the Colorado catcher put his name on an award won by Willie Mays, Joe Morgan, Frank and Brooks Robinson, both Ken Griffeys and Mike Trout.

"I honestly can't believe that my name is going to be next to some of those names," Díaz said through a translator, clutching the crystal bat awarded the MVP. "Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine that I would be in this position."

After five years with the Pirates, Díaz found out from his agent in December 2019 he had been non-tendered.

"When they let me go, I didn't allow myself to feel defeated," Díaz said. "I maintained my confidence and stayed positive."

He got a minor league deal with the Rockies a month later, made the big league roster at the start of the pandemic-delated 2020 season and earned a $1.2 million big league contract for 2021. He hit .246 with 18 homers and 44 RBIs, and Colorado rewarded him with a $14.5 million, three-year agreement.

Díaz batted .228 with nine homers and 51 RBIs last year, then earned his first All-Star trip by batting .277 with nine homers and 45 RBIs heading into this year's break.

"He's really improved in every phase of his game," said NL manager Rob Thomson of the Philadelphia Phillies.

Thomson had called Rockies manager Bud Black to learn about Díaz.

"He said: `This is one of the finest people you'll ever meet. He's a complete team player,'" Thomson related. "`Do anything you want. If he doesn't play, that's fine. If he does play, that would be great. He's just happy to be there.'"

With the AL leading 2-1, Nick Castellanos worked a nine-pitch walk against Bautista leading off the eighth. Díaz batted for Jorge Soler and with a 2-2 count drove a splitter 360 feet, where it landed under the manual scoreboard behind the left-field wall. The 20th pinch homer in All-Star history was a no-doubt drive. Díaz took three small steps and watched before starting his trot.

"A splitter that stayed up in the zone," said Bautista, who had given up one homer in 56 at-bats this season ending with that pitch.

Díaz jumped as he approached the dugout and exchanged slaps with teammates. Geraldo Perdomo doused him with water. A short while later, he became the first Venezuelan to earn All-Star MVP since Dave Concepción in 1972. Díaz's jersey is going to the Hall of Fame.

"Maybe the third or fourth inning, Orlando Arcia, he was telling me that `Hey, you're going to go up to bat you're going to hit a home run, and you're going to win the MVP,'" Díaz recalled. "I didn't think it was going to turn into all this."

IN PICKUP BASKETBALL LAWSUIT

Morant's lawyers cite 'stand your ground' law, self-defense

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP)—The future of a lawsuit accusing Memphis Grizzlies star Ja Morant of assaulting a teenager during a pickup basketball game hinges on whether Morant will be allowed to say that he was acting in self-defense and can receive immunity under Tennessee law.

A judge on Wednesday ruled that Morant's lawyers can proceed for now with their argument that Morant was acting in self-defense when he punched Joshua Holloway during a game at the All-Star player's Memphis-area home in July 2022.

Morant's lawyers have acknowledged he punched Holloway one time after Holloway threw a basketball at Morant and the ball hit Morant in the chin. In a July 26 motion, the player's lawyers said he should be immune from liability under the state's "stand your ground" law, which allows people who feel threatened at their homes to act with force in certain situations.

Circuit Court Judge Carol Chumney said the next step would be to hear from lawyers in the case, including those representing the Tennessee Attorney General, about whether the law can be applied to the case under the state Constitution.

Morant's accuser was 17 when the lawsuit was filed. It accuses Morant and friend Davonte Pack of assault, reckless endangerment, abuse or neglect, and infliction of emotional distress. An amended complaint identified the plaintiff as Holloway, who is now 18.

AP

Memphis Grizzlies guard Ja Morant warms up before an NBA basketball game against the Houston Rockets, March 22, 2023, in Memphis, Tenn.

Morant filed a countersuit accusing Holloway of slander, battery and assault.

No criminal charges have been filed against Morant.

The lawsuit has led to complicated legal arguments, including disagreement about whether the state's "stand your ground" law can be used to support Morant.

In a hearing Monday, Holloway's lawyer Rebecca Adelman argued Morant has waived his claim to immunity and that the self-defense claim under the state law can't be a reason to dismiss the civil case, partly because there is no ongoing criminal investigation against Morant.

Adelman said the self-defense and immunity arguments came too late in the process. She called it a "Hail Mary of Hail Marys."

Will Perry, Morant's lawyer, argued there are ways for the "stand your ground" law to apply in civil cases and that Morant is entitled to immunity. He said the motion was timely because the trial is not scheduled until 2024.

Outside court on Wednesday, Adelman told reporters that she was disappointed in the judge's decision to allow the immunity claim to continue, but she was pleased that the court is allowing arguments on the constitutional challenge to the law's application in the case.

"These are ... very important issues to everyone," Adelman said.

Chumney, the judge, has issued a stay in the case, which means depositions, subpoenas, exchanging of evidence and other steps in the lawsuit are on hold. She set an Oct. 12 hearing on the matter.

The NBA suspended Morant for 25 games when the upcoming season starts after a second video of him flashing a handgun was posted online. The video of Morant showing a gun while sitting in the passenger seat of a car was posted after he finished serving an eight-game suspension in March for a video in which he flashed a handgun in a Denver-area strip club.

Morant apologized for both videos.

On Monday—a year after the pickup game at Morant's house in Eads—authorities issued an arrest warrant on a misdemeanor assault charge for Pack in connection with the fight.

Flopping, challenge rules changed by NBA's Board of Governors

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Upon review, coaches will have more chances to ask for reviews.

The NBA's Board of Governors approved two rule changes for the coming season Tuesday—one to give coaches a second challenge if their first one is successful, the other being a technical foul for flopping.

The challenge rule change is something that coaches have wanted for some time. Coaches who challenge a call and are successful will get the chance to make a second challenge—with one catch. Teams must have a timeout in order to call for a challenge; that timeout would not be retained even if a coach won that first challenge.

Players who flop—or are called for committing "a physical act that reasonably appears to be intended to cause the officials to call a foul on another player," the league said — will be given a non-unsportsmanlike technical, which will not count as a personal foul or lead to ejection. But it will give the opposing team a free throw and could lead to a possession change, depending on when it is called.

Officials can choose to stop live play to call a flopping violation, or can wait until the next "neutral opportunity" to do so.

Floppers will be fined $2,000, with fines rising incrementally for repeat offenders. The flopping rule will be on a one-year experiment.

Both rule changes first got unanimous recommendation from the NBA's Competition Committee, composed of players, representatives from the National Basketball Players Association, coaches, governors, team basketball executives and referees.

Jabeur, Sabalenka make way back into the Wimbledon semifinals

WIMBLEDON, England (AP)—From where Ons Jabeur was sitting on Centre Court, a spot in the Wimbledon semifinals was as good as guaranteed.

The sixth-seeded Tunisian walked into the main stadium at the All England Club on Wednesday to play Elena Rybakina in a rematch of last year's final. Jabeur lost that time, but not this time—later joking that it was possibly thanks to the seating arrangements.

"When we entered the court, felt like a similar feeling of playing (the) same match against her. But I made sure I changed seats this time. I went for the other seat that she won (from) last year," Jabeur said. "Maybe it's the seat that made me win today."

AP

Tunisia's Ons Jabeur stretches to return to Kazakhstan's Elena Rybakina in a women's singles match on day ten of the Wimbledon tennis championships in London, Wednesday, July 12, 2023.

Jabeur, who last year became the first woman from North Africa and first Arab woman to reach a Grand Slam final, beat the defending champion 6-7 (5), 6-4, 6-1.

She won eight of the final nine games, mixing her drop shots and slices throughout with some hard-hitting forehands and backhands.

"Last year maybe I wasn't ready to play this kind of match," Jabeur said. "I don't regret last year. It happened for a reason. I always say it. It was meant to be this year. It was meant to be in the quarterfinals."

After reaching last year's Wimbledon final, Jabeur made it to the deciding match at the U.S. Open. In New York, she lost to Iga Swiatek.

Rybakina followed up her Wimbledon title with a first-round exit at that U.S. Open, but she then made the final at the Australian Open at the start of this year.

"Some moments I play really well, but was not consistent," Rybakina said of Wednesday's match. "Since physically (I) was not the greatest, then the wrong decisions came."

For Jabeur to get back into the final, she will have to beat Australian Open champion Aryna Sabalenka. The second-seeded Belarusian advanced by beating Madison Keys 6-2, 6-4 on No. 1 Court.

That match will be second on Centre Court on Thursday, after Elina Svitolina faces Marketa Vondrousova in the other women's semifinal match.

Sabalenka reached the Wimbledon semifinals for the second straight time, with a one-year break in between because she was banned from the tournament in 2022 along with other players from her country and from Russia because of the war in Ukraine.

"I was really sad that I couldn't play here last year," Sabalenka said. "But at the same time I was thinking that, OK, it's a good time to kind of, like, reset and start everything over again."

Sabalenka's victory improved her record to 17-1 at major tournaments this year. She is the only former Grand Slam champion remaining in the women's tournament.

Keys was trying to complete a full set of Grand Slam semifinal appearances but she lost for the second time in the Wimbledon quarterfinals. Her only major final came at the 2017 U.S. Open, when she lost to Sloane Stephens.

So for Keys, the build-up to that final major of the season starts now.

"I'm always looking forward to the U.S. hard court swing. I've had a lot of success there. It's some of my favorite tournaments," Keys said. "If I can just kind of keep up the hard work and continue to do what I did to build coming into this grass-court season, I think that there's plenty of opportunity."

Over 100 attend DYS 2023 Summer Youth Empowerment Camp

LEIGH GASES

Participants Devin Iguel, right, and Keoka Savea shoot hoops during the Division of Youth Services' 2023 Summer Youth Empowerment Camp at the Carolinian Affairs grounds in Garapan on Wednesday.

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The outdoor Division of Youth Services' 2023 Summer Youth Empowerment Camp at the Carolinian Affairs grounds in Garapan is bustling with over 100 participants.

The children in the camp are engaged in cultural activities and sports to keep their young minds and bodies active during the summer.

The camp started on July 10 and will last until July 21 for students 5 to 12 years old. Session 2 is scheduled from July 24 to 28 for students 13 to 17 years old.

DYS Family and Youth Enhancement Program community development specialist Anna Rangamar said, in an interview with *Saipan Tribune* on Wednesday, that the camp is going well despite the rainy weather that welcomed the camp this week.

She said "it's a lot of physical activities, team building activities, and cultural activities. Camp has been okay so far. It looks like the children are enjoying themselves."

Children were divided into different groups and stations—sports activities including soccer, obstacle course, basketball, and volleyball; leaf weaving and leaf painting; arts and crafts; and the coconut station where they learned how to make coconut candy and coconut oil, among others.

They also had a field trip to Kalabera Cave and World War II remains yesterday.

Koeka Savea, a 9-year-old camp participant seen playing basketball with 8-year-old Devin Iguel, said that he joined because he wanted to have fun this summer.

"I don't really want to stay at home and be bored the whole time," Savea said. "My favorite thing to do here is weaving and playing basketball." He said he's also made friends during his time in the camp.

There are about 20 adult and high school volunteers in the camp assisting with activities. One volunteer, 14-year-old Ciena Omapas, said that she enjoys being with children and that she's volunteered since she was 12 years old. "The camp so far is fun. I got to make new friends. Everybody is like one big family here. The kids, they can be hard-headed sometimes, but I love them. They're good kids and I see a lot of potential in them."

The partners of the camp are CNMI Public School System Project Haligi, Northern Marianas CREES, NMC 4H, Mariana Islands Nature Alliance, and the Division of Coastal Resources Management.

3rd Annual Race for a Cause Bike Race on July 23

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

This year's Race for a Cause 3rd Annual Bike Race will be held on Sunday, July 23, starting at 6am in Marpi.

The race check in time is 5:30am.

The long course will kick off from the former Mariana Resort & Spa to Banzai Cliff, La Fiesta, Bird Island, Suicide Cliff, and back, and with the short course from Mariana Resort to La Fiesta, to the "Triangle" and back.

Registration is open until Friday, July 21. The registration fee is $20 and can be paid on the day of race kit pick up.

Awards will be given to the overall Top 3 men's and women's road bike and MTB, and age category.

The categories are long course, MTB, male; long course, MTB, female; long course, road bike, male; long course, road bike, female; short course, MTB, male; short course, MTB, female; short course, road bike, male; and short course, road bike, female.

Dr. Lily Muldoon and Ren Ren Gaviola were the top finishers in the road bike and MTB divisions of the Race for a Cause in the second annual race.

The race is sponsored by veteran rider Willy Barbo.

Contact Barbo at (670) 287-8216 for more details.

Register for the race at https://www.webscorer.com/register?raceid=319538

LEIGH GASES

Women's category winners, from left, first place Dr. Lily Muldoon, third place Jay Anne Felipe, and second place Heather Brooks pose for a photo. Men's overall winner Ren Ren Gaviola, second from right, second place Mark Isip, right, and third place Fred Remollosa, third from right, are also in the photo.

NASON

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CNMI Sports Hall of Famer and CNMI national coach Jeff Race said so far so good for the Commonwealth's best bets in the boys 14.

"LaHunn is our thoroughbred and hasn't been tested yet. That should change tomorrow. Nason really used his brain today to overcome his opponent."

In other matches yesterday, Anne Lee lost to girls 14 top seed Colita Hakena of Papua New Guinea, 3-6, 1-6, in the quarterfinals. Lee is now relegated to the 5-8 playoff.

In the girls 16, Irin Chung won her positional matchup against compatriot Hoo Wang, 6-4, 3-0 (retired); Henry Seungwoo Choi took out fellow CNMI netter June Yu, 6-2, 6-3, in another positional match in the boys 16; Siwoo Lee beat Federated States of Micronesia's Dontrick Daniel, 6-4, 6-0, in a positional match in the boys 14; and Lina Tsukagoshi won her positional match against Guam's Rachel San Agustin, 6-1, 6-1.

Race said experience or lack of it seems to have befallen the CNMI's junior netters in the 2023 POJC.

"Many of the kids feel the pressure of playing in, what is for them, their biggest tournament. They feel fear and that feeling causes them to abandon their training. Our focus in the next year will definitely include that," he said.

Race, meanwhile, saluted the CNMI boys 12 team, saying "they've been doing really well. Michael [Jeon] and Ryan [Choi] have really come through. Michael has played with real courage at times. He's quite fearless and has overcome match points down on multiple occasions to come back and win matches. Ryan is one of the strongest players in his age group. The girls are quite young but have played a lot of tough matches too."

For Tsukagoshi, finally winning her third game after two losses was the silver lining in her POJC campaign.

"Fiji has been good. I've had a lot of good games with people I went up against last year. My shots got stronger and I feel like I got better at putting the shots where they can't get it," she said.

Team CNMI, which plays as part of the North Pacific Team in the POJC, is coached by Race and Colin Ramsey, the current No. 1 singles player in the Commonwealth.

PANGILINAN

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national player, and then ventured into coaching, too. I am blessed with all these opportunities because of the support I am getting from the NMBA and Badminton Oceania," said Pangilinan.

"Next month's coaching course is another opportunity not just for myself, but for the whole badminton program on island, as having additional knowledge in coaching and learning from experts would allow me to share this knowledge to my fellow coaches as we work together toward developing and training more badminton players in the NMI," she added.

Pangilinan is a product of NMBA's youth clinic and has represented the NMI in Pacific Games (2019 in Apia, Samoa) and Pacific Mini Games (on Saipan) and in competitions in Guam, New Zealand, and the two 2024 Paris Olympic Games qualifying tournaments that NMBA hosted last month. She is also a member of the NMBA coaching pool that goes around schools to hold Shuttle Time sessions for students and she is currently part of a summer program that conducts badminton clinics at the TSL Sports Complex.

Meanwhile, NMBA president Merlie Tolentino is pleased with Pangilinan's inclusion to the Female Coach Mentoring Program.

"Coaching is a critical part in the development of any sports program. Our coaches' commitment and technical expertise, and experience, are very important in supporting our continued efforts to grow badminton in the NMI as they are the main people working with and training players. We welcome every opportunity for our coaches to take part in programs that will help them become more effective and better coaches. Thank you to Badminton Oceania for facilitating this opportunity and to BWF for recognizing the potential of our coaches," Tolentino said.

The NMBA president added that opportunities like these will also serve as inspiration to individuals, especially student-athletes, involved in the NMI badminton program. Whether one is a player, coach, umpire, or line judge, their commitment to the program can open career pathways to them.

Under the BWF program, Pangilinan will attend the Coaching and Sports Science Education session on Aug. 24, while she will also take part in the two-leg BWF World Coaching Conference scheduled on Aug. 24 and 25. The NMI representatives along with several coaches from the four other continental members of BWF will then observe games in the TotalEnergies BWF World Championships 2023 in the evening of Aug. 25 for a match analysis as part of the program. ***(PR)***

MOC

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in the men's outside reef race of also 8.5 miles with a time of 1:05:44.30.

Second place in the women's race went to Saipan Paddling Club's Women team at 1:20:01.88; third went to Marianas Pacific Paddlers Women Blue at 1:20:31.82; and fourth place went to MOC Women Orange at 1:20:32.74.

MOC 2 came a close second in the men's race with a time of 1:06:10.56; third place went to SPC Men A at 1:07:02.16; and fourth place went to SPC Men B 1:09:22.20.

There was also a women's novice race inside the reef for 4.5 miles that is a non-point race with MPP Novice 1 team coming in first place with 1:02:22.83; close second went to MPP Novice 2 at 1:02:34.06; and third place went to SPC Women Novice at 1:04:25.23.

The V6 and V1 paddlers have more races to look forward to next Saturday, July 22, as V1 paddlers in the open men and open women will take on a 4- to 6-mile course from the Kilili Beach to the 13 Fishermen Monument and back. There are also junior girls and boys categories for that race.

Top 3 finishers will be awarded on that day.

Paddlers will then welcome the month of August with V6 distance races of about 10-12 miles on Aug. 12.

On Aug. 26, V1 open men/women and junior paddlers will take on the 6- to 8-mile race from Kilili Beach to the black buoy and back. Top 3 in the V6/V1 distance will be awarded that day.

The season will close off with a bang on Sept. 23 and 24 as the V1 open men/women and junior paddlers will take on the 500m sprints.

V6 open men/women and mixed paddlers will also race in the 500m and in the 1,500m sprints. There will also be a V12 open men/women and mixed paddlers 500m race.

Awards for the Top 3 finishers will be given on Sept. 24.

NL snaps All-Star Game losing streak, tops AL 3-2 behind Elias Díaz homer.

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Over 100 attend DYS 2023 Summer Youth Empowerment Camp.

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Nason, La Hunn onto semifinals

Tsukagoshi

Lee

Wessel

Pangilinan to attend BWF coaching course

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Janelle Pangilinan playing for the NMI in one of the two 2024 Paris Olympic Games qualifying tournaments that Saipan hosted last month at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Janelle Pangilinan teaches children how to hold the racket during a badminton clinic at the TSL Sports Complex.

Northern Marianas Badminton Association director and 2022 Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games medalist Janelle Pangilinan is leaving for Denmark next month to attend the Badminton World Federation Female Coach Mentoring Program.

The course, which is held in conjunction with the TotalEnergies BWF World Championships 2023 and BWF World Coaching Conference 2023 in Copenhagen, will run from Aug. 23 to 25. The program, which is made possible through the collaboration between the five continental members of BWF and the Olympic Solidarity, aims to develop female coaches and encourage them to join the growing pool of well-trained and experienced coaches across the globe.

"I would like to thank the Northern Marianas Badminton Association, Badminton Oceania, and Badminton World Federation for opening this great opportunity for me. I started as a young badminton player, became a

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By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Nason Wessel and La Hunn Lam are safely into the semifinals of the boys 14 division as the 2023 Pacific Oceania Junior Championships is in the homestretch in Lautoka, Fiji.

Wessel advanced after beating Fiji's Uraia Ratu, 6-3, 6-1, in the quarterfinals yesterday.

It's the third third straight triumph for Wessel after an opening day loss.

"Personally I feel like I could've done better in terms of getting a higher place in the semis but I feel happy I'm in the semis. POJC is a good stepping stone for professional tennis and if you do well in it you can go to a lot of places. I love Fiji but it would be nice to go somewhere else for tennis as well," he said.

Lam, meanwhile, posted his fourth straight dominating win to remain perfect in the POJC following a masterful 6-0, 6-0 victory over American Samoa's Aifili Tamasoaali'L.

"It feels great and exciting to make it this far and play in the semifinals. I will be 100% focused and do my best to win to make the best memories in my age group," he said.

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MOC dominates first day of V6 distance races

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The Marianas Outrigger Club V6 paddlers continue their dominance out in the water of Kilili Beach after they bested other paddling clubs during the first day of distance races to kick-start the va'a season of the Northern Marianas National Paddling Sports Federation last July 8.

The MOC Women Black team came in first for the outside the reef race of 8.5 miles with a time of 1:18:02.20, while MOC 1 was first place

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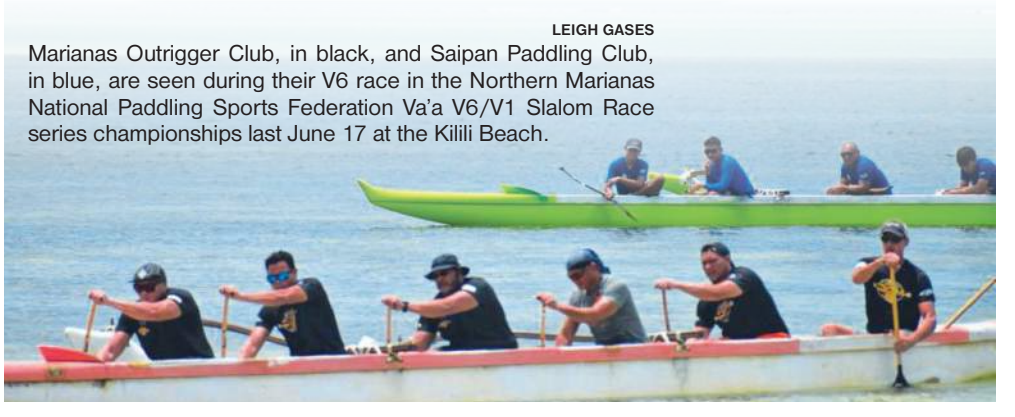

LEIGH GASES

Marianas Outrigger Club, in black, and Saipan Paddling Club, in blue, are seen during their V6 race in the Northern Marianas National Paddling Sports Federation Va'a V6/V1 Slalom Race series championships last June 17 at the Kilili Beach.